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Kilala naman sila, ba't tagilid ang tsansa?

MGA KANDIDATONG ALANGANIN

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

email feedback

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Lunar eclipse visible in RP tomorrow

By Volt Contreras

THE HEAVENS have prepared a rare treat for insomniacs, night-shift security guards, nocturnal *balut* vendors and other sleepless souls.

A total lunar eclipse can be observed in the country in the small hours of May 5, accord-

LUNAR/ A9

Joker statement, TV report irk 'Da King'

By Christine Avendaño

PLATAPORMA KO AKSYON, HINDI PURO SATSAT!

ALAMINOS, Pangasinan—Opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.'s goodwill is threatening to run out faster than the time left

JOKER/ A8

Honasan backs GMA platform

But senator insists he's still for FPJ

By Carlito Pablo, Cynthia D. Balana and Christine O. Avendaño

OPPOSITION Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan yesterday formally committed himself to support the programs of President Macapagal-Arroyo, who is seeking a full six-year term in the May 10 elections.

As chair of the Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc. (PGBI), Honasan signed a covenant binding the group "to promote within the Brotherhood and among the Filipino people support for the vigorous implementation of programs for peace, unification, reconciliation and development being undertaken by the present administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo and the platform of good governance, political, economic, social and constitutional reform of Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats."

The PGBI is a group of active and retired soldiers linked to the July 27, 2003, failed coup attempt. It is taking part in the party-list election.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., president of the Lakas-CMD, signed the document on behalf of the ruling party at the Club Filipino in Greenhills, San Juan.

At one time during the signing ceremony, De Venecia referred to Honasan as "Congressman Honasan." The senator, who is on his last term, is a nominee of the PGBI.

Lakas-CMD executive director Jose Ma. Rufino, who was present, agreed with the observation that Honasan's signing of the covenant was a de facto defection to the administration.

"It could be read that way," said Rufino, who is also Ms Macapagal's political liaison officer. "A lot of mysteries are going on," he playfully added.

But Honasan came up a step short of switching allegiance to Ms Macapagal from actor Fernando Poe Jr., standard-bearer of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP). The former Army colonel is overall head of the KNP's security and anti-poll fraud operations.

"I will continue to campaign for the united opposition in the same way that Speaker De Venecia will campaign for the administration," he said, when asked whether he was crossing over to the camp of Ms Macapagal.

While Honasan signed the covenant on behalf of the PGBI and not the KNP, the senator claimed that this was "cleared with the highest leadership of the KNP."

Poe dismissed insinuations that Honasan, a member of the KNP executive committee, was abandoning his camp for the administration, saying tha.

HONASAN/ A9

5 bets invited to Mass for credible polls

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

WHILE THEY fight for the anointment of the influential Iglesia ni Cristo and the Catholic charismatic group El Shaddai, all five presidential candidates have been invited by the Catholic Church to a Mass for peaceful and credible elections on the eve of the nationwide polls.

Former President Corazon Aquino made the announcement during the "Gathering of Mothers for Clean and Honest Election" which she and President Macapagal-Arroyo led at the Miriam College in Quezon City yesterday.

Aquino said Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales asked her to extend the invitation to all the candidates, starting with Ms Macapagal. Rosales will officiate the Mass, which winds up a special novena in honor of Mary, the Lady of all Nations.

"President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

5 BETS/ G8

THE PHILIPPINES' Jennifer Rosales hugs the trophy after her first LPGA win at the Chick-Fil-A Charity Championship in Stockbridge, Georgia, USA. REUTERS

Rosales bags first LPGA title, wins ₱13 million

AHEAD OF a big boxing championship fight in Las Vegas that means the world to her countrymen, a homegrown Filipino upstaged the big guns to capture her maiden victory in the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Tour on Sunday (Monday in Manila).

Jennifer Rosales, who first made a name as a fashion icon with her flashy multicolored playing outfits, showed that she could also beat the game's superstars when she fired a flawless 7-under-par 65 in the final round for a one-stroke victory in the Chick-Fil-A Charity Championship in Stockbridge, Georgia.

Rosales received $240,000 (about P13.4 million) for her first win in five seasons, one of the largest ever prizes received by a Filipino athlete abroad and undoubtedly the biggest for local pros.

Only featherweight boxer Manny Pacquiao received more with his $350,000 payoff when he defeated Marco Barrera last year. Pacquiao stands to get paid $1 million in his showdown with Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez on Sunday at the MGM Grand Arena.

Playing four threesomes behind the final group, Rosales steadily clawed her way to the top with seven birdies through the first 14 holes. She averted a big disaster by saving par on the 18th after sending her second shot into the stands that proved to be the clincher for the former US NCAA champion.

Then came the hardest part.

Moving on top of the leaderboard with

ROSALES/ A5

Etta says NPA rebels out to get her

AKBAYAN Rep. Etta Rosales yesterday said she had become a target of the New People's Army after she denounced the communist-led rebel group for extorting money from candidates of all stripes in the May 10 elections.

At a news conference, Rosales said she found it ominous that posters, which read "Akbayan Partido ng AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines)," were pasted outside her home yesterday morning.

"This means we've become open targets," she said. "Once they've convinced themselves that Akbayan is in cahoots with the military, that we are the enemies of the people, they may kill us now. They've done that to other people, like Jun Punzalan and Rolly Kintanar."

Punzalan, a congressman of Quezon province, and Kintanar, a former NPA chief, were killed by communist gunmen for alleged crimes against the people and the revolutionary movement.

Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines, denied Rosales' claim that the NPA was out to kill her.

"Etta is not a target. There is no such thing as an NPA hit list; it's only a product of the military propaganda mill," Rosal said in a mobile phone interview.

Even so, the CPP spokesperson asked Rosales: "Are you now afraid of your partnership with fascist groups in the country?"

ETTA/ A4

THE CHARM OFFENSIVE REVISITED

ELEKSYON 2004

Roco's eyes still engaging, grip still firm, heart still on fire

Editor's Note: As the Day of Reckoning closes in, the INQUIRER *starts a series of updates on the campaign styles and impact of the five presidential candidates who were featured here in March.*

By Emmie G. Velarde
Desk Editor

"LIKE GOING out in the sun without a hat," was how senatorial candidate Frank Chavez described the campaign of his party, Alyansa ng Pag-Asa, after standard-bearer Raul Roco left to seek medical treatment in the United States.

To this day, reporter Sheila Crisostomo of the Philippine Star takes the statement to be the most succinct description of the Alyansa's situation at the time. It hit straight home, she said, for although they were not exactly rendered helpless, the candidates must have felt vulnerable.

After all, vice presidential candidate Herminio Aquino Jr. pointed out a few times that Roco was the "heart" of Alyansa. There are many ways of saying this, in fact, and nearly every one was expressed. "Roco is Alyansa and Alyansa is Roco," INQUIRER reporter Michael Lim Ubac told television's "The Probe Team."

Crisostomo recalled unabashedly that her initial reaction to the post-Easter announcement that altered the landscape of the national presidential campaign was, "Oh no! *Wala na tayong beat* (We just lost our beat)!"

If, for the 10 or so media men regularly covering the Alyansa, "beat" meant assignment, to some members of the slate, it meant something more. "*Nawalan ng kumpas*, at least *sa akin* (It lost rhythm, at least for me)," senatorial candidate Bong Coo said of sorties immediately following Roco's departure. "For instance, we are used to seeking people out because they don't exactly flock to us. So we were still going into the markets. That was fine, but when we started getting asked where he was, sometimes I missed a step."

But, she conceded, "Raul really had to leave. I, for one, noticed that he was getting tired more quickly and more often, and his famous appetite was gone."

Reporters remember that Coo and blind lawyer and senatorial candidate Nicanor Gatmaytan fled the room when Roco announced his impending departure for the United States. Among the candidates, the two were apparently the most upset by the news.

ROCO'S EYES/ A8

HIS "rock star" gait is now an unhurried stride, but Raul Roco and the rest of the Alyansa ng Pag-Asa candidates are truly back in fighting form. ERIK ARAZAS

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Visayas and Mindanao including Palawan will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.
SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/05/04/04

Second FRONTPAGE

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Bong R gets Comelec nod; Coo sues

By Martin P. Marfil
and Michael Lim Ubac

REVILLA: Favorable opinion

COO: Comelec didn't inform me

THE COMMISSION on Elections yesterday said that votes cast for "Bong" would be counted in favor of administration senatorial candidate Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr.

According to Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos and Election Commissioner Resurreccion Borra, Revilla had actually asked the commission to certify "Bong" as his nickname.

The petition, the officials said, was granted after deliberation.

"The nickname of Bong Coo is 'Bong Coo' while Bong Revilla filed a petition to change his nickname from 'Kap' to 'Bong.' His petition was granted... A vote for 'Bong' is a vote for Bong Revilla," Abalos said in an interview with reporters.

This was confirmed by Borra in a separate interview who said that they discussed the Revilla case and that they decided in the actor's favor.

Both election officials were referring to the April 23 memorandum issued by the Comelec's law department which stated that Revilla had filed a petition asking that he be allowed to change his nickname in his certificate of candidacy from "Kap" to "Bong."

In it, the law department said that Revilla had run for various local Cavite posts in the 1995, 1998 and 2001 elections and that he used his nickname "Bong."

The law department recommended that Revilla be allowed to change his nickname and to make the necessary amendment in the certified list of senatorial candidates.

The Comelec en banc granted the law department recommendation on April 28.

Meanwhile, Alyansa ng Pag-Asa senatorial candidate Olivia "Bong" Coo yesterday asked the Supreme Court to overturn the Comelec resolution which allowed Revilla to amend his certificate of candidacy (COC).

In a petition for review and certiorari, the four-time bowling world champion accused the Comelec of conniving with Revilla in defrauding her of the right to due process.

At a press conference at the Alyansa headquarters in Ortigas, Pasig City, Coo said the poll body surreptitiously issued Resolution No. 6713 on April 28 without any prior notice, depriving her of her fundamental right to comment on Revilla's request.

Fellow senatorial candidates Nicanor Gatmaytan and Perfecto Yasay, who will act as Coo's lawyers, said Coo should have been informed of the request because it would have an impact on her legal right to use the nickname "Bong."

Gatmaytan explained that Coo wrote her nickname "Bong" in her COC, which was accepted by the Comelec. Revilla, for his part, put "Kap" as his nickname, and "Bong Revilla" as his complete surname.

Realizing later that he had made a major blunder in his COC, Revilla—mainstay of GMA-7's "Idol Ko si Kap" comedy show—with the help of his lawyer Romulo Macalintal went to the Comelec legal department to ask for a favorable opinion.

Yasay said that the Revilla camp was forced to publicly disclose the existence of the resolution to counter Coo's accusations that he had offered her P20 million to force her withdrawal from the race.

"Bong Revilla was forced to admit that he has a Comelec resolution that had allowed him to change his nickname from 'Kap' to 'Bong.' But Bong Coo, as early as January, had already asked Comelec to consider all votes cast for 'Bong' counted in her favor. The petition was not acted upon, but the later petition of Bong was allowed. The net effect is that even votes for Bong Coo would go to Revilla," Yasay said.

Coo alleged at a press conference yesterday that Revilla himself made the offer on April 27, a day before the poll body issued the assailed resolution.

Besides Revilla, presidential adviser on political affairs Gabriel Claudio, and a member of the First Family allegedly approached Coo with an offer of a Cabinet position to convince her to withdraw.

When she declined, she started to receive death threats.

Alyansa senatorial candidate Frank Chavez warned the harassers of Coo to stop their despicable activities. "They can't scare Bong Coo. She's as tough as nails. You don't become world champion if you are a coward."

Chavez condemned the death threats and harassment, vowing that he and the entire Alyansa ticket will stand by Coo.

Action star Seagal says he's GMA fan

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

TURNING fan for one day, visiting American action star Steven Seagal admits he is a great admirer not only of the Philippines but of its president whom he has yet to meet.

A frequent flyer to the country, Seagal proclaimed himself a big fan of President Macapagal-Arroyo and hoped she would get elected on Monday.

Accompanied by Tourism Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan and his predecessor Richard Gordon, Seagal dropped by Malacañang yesterday, but failed to see the President who was at a graduation ceremony in Quezon City where she was the speaker.

Seagal said he was in town to explore the possibility of shooting a movie here.

"All I can say is I came here to discuss business with my long-time friends and also the possibility of making a movie, and releasing my album," he said. "But I am also a big fan of the President. I've never met her but my impression of her is that she's very straight, sincere, honest, really talented president, and I hope she gets reelected," Seagal told reporters.

Asked how he knew Ms Macapagal, Seagal said: "I've actually followed her from the beginning and I told all my friends in America that I like her and I have a lot of friends who have always told me that they like her. So even though I've never met her, I feel she is very good."

Asked if he thought actors could make good presidents, Seagal laughed.

"I know governors can't. I don't know, (former US President Ronald) Reagan was a pretty good one but I think it really depends on the situation. I don't mean to take sides but I'm a pretty good fan of the President (Macapagal) at the moment," he said.

Seagal refused to divulge details of the movie he was planning to make. "That depends on my friends here," he said when asked when he would shoot the movie. "We're going to talk tonight, and if they have the right answers I'm coming back immediately."

The actor said he would like to get Filipino actresses for his movie if it pushes through. "They say there are many beautiful women here, and I'd like to put them in my movie," he said.

He said he was not deterred by threats of terrorism when he decided to come here.

"I'm sorry there are these problems and I have a concern for all people that no one will be harmed. I am a lover of peace and I would love it if there could be a peaceful resolution of all these things. But I myself am not concerned about the threats," he said.

Seagal said he has not been asked to endorse local tourism, although he said he would be glad to do so.

"I haven't heard anything to that effect, but I'm ready. As you know I've been here many times. If there's anything I can do to promote the Philippines, it will be my honor."

Said Pagdanganan of Seagal's visit: "I think that should show that the President is very popular not just with Filipinos but also with celebrities."

Unity continues to elude opposition

By Norman Bordadora
and Christine O. Avendaño

UNITY, anchored on the fielding of a single candidate, continues to elude the opposition in the homestretch of the election period after the Sunday meeting between rival opposition bets actor Fernando Poe Jr. and Sen. Panfilo Lacson ended with nothing but a pledge to guard each other's votes.

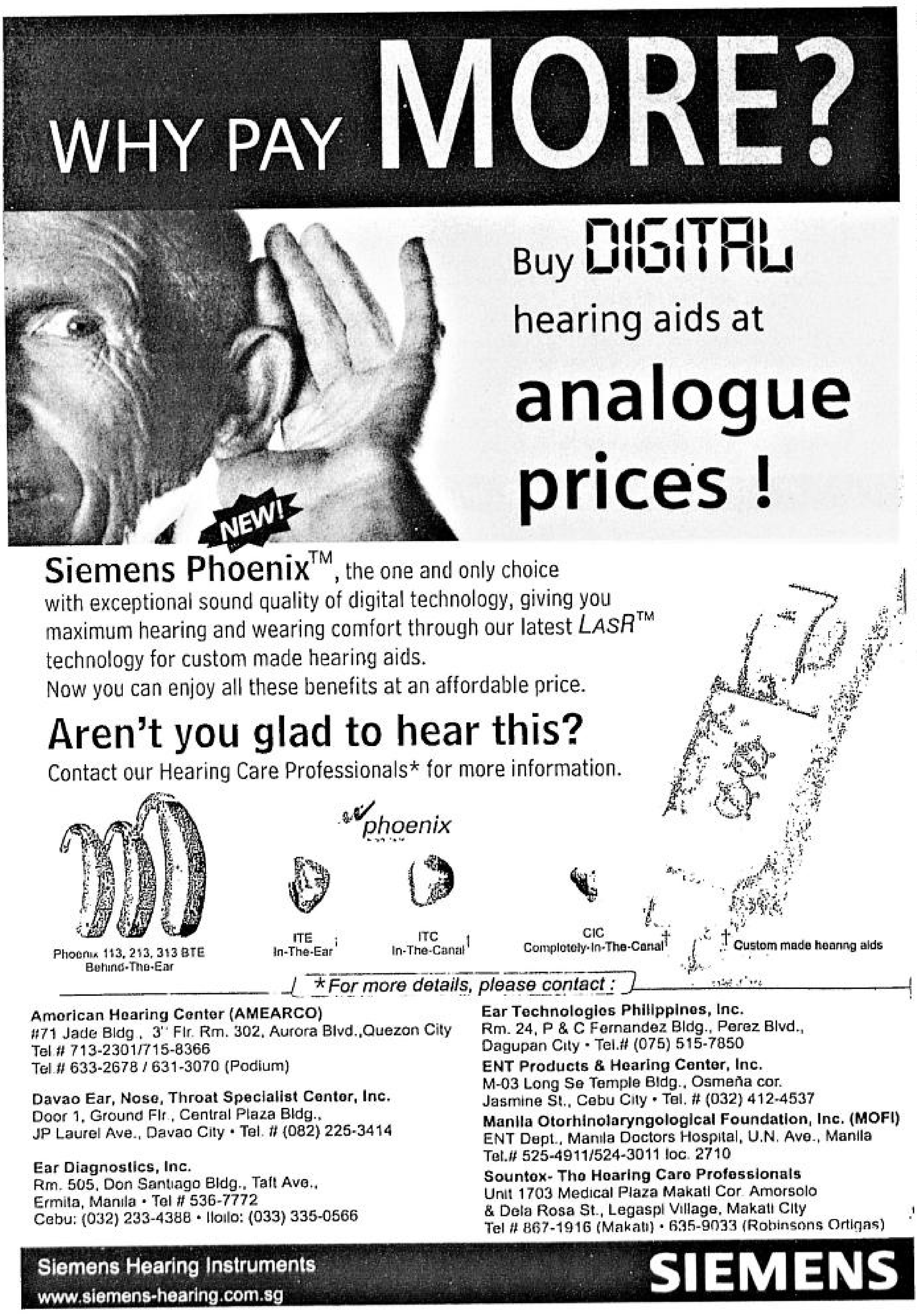
Poe, however, said yesterday that unity talks between him and Lacson were far from over, adding that he continues to remain hopeful. "*May pag-asang maging* unified and one candidate *pa rin ang oposisyon hanggang wala pang* May 10," he said. (There is hope for a unified opposition with one candidate).

Sen. Vicente Sotto III, Poe's spokesperson, also denied that the meeting was a failure adding was "very cordial" and that having one candidate on May 10 was "still possible."

Although he is lagging in the surveys behind President Macapagal-Arroyo and the popular actor, Lacson said he would not back out of the presidential race especially since there is only less than a week remaining before May 10.

"We shall face all obstacles, real or imagined, and submit ourselves to the true voice of the sovereign people no matter what. There's no turning back," Lacson said.

Lacson also claimed that the Poe camp offered concessions as the senate presidency when he goes back to the chamber, and the speakership for his campaign chief, San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora who is running for reelection.



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Top Mindoro Red leader, 2 others nabbed in Batangas

By Alcuin Papa

ARMY soldiers escort suspected communist rebel leader Rogelio Villanueva after he was presented at a news conference at the Army headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo Monday.

AFP PHOTO/ROMEO GACAD

THE MILITARY said yesterday it had captured the top communist leader on Mindoro island and two companions in Batangas on Sunday.

In Masbate on the same day, soldiers killed one of four heavily armed men believed to be new recruits of the communist New People's Army.

The captured Mindoro rebel was identified by Philippine Army intelligence personnel as Rogelio Villanueva, alias Eduardo Serrano, a senior member of the Southern Tagalog Regional Party Committee's (STRPC) executive committee.

Villanueva and STRPC members Joy Mendoza, alias Luisa, and Riza Mesana were arrested by Army intelligence and police operatives at around 10 a.m. on the Balintawak Highway in Lipa City.

The Army said its intelligence had tracked the whereabouts of Villanueva, who tried to escape with his companions before being nabbed after a brief chase.

Recovered from the three were subversive documents, permit-to-campaign forms, two communist flags, a laptop computer and two handguns.

Army intelligence said Villanueva was the most senior member of the STRPC executive committee who oversaw rebel operations in Oriental Mindoro. He was also head of the Occidental Mindoro Provincial Party Committee and was former head of the Mindoro Island Party Committee.

Villanueva had a standing warrant of arrest for multiple murder issued in 1990 by the Bongabong, Oriental Mindoro, Regional Trial Court.

The three rebels were presented to media at Philippine Army Headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, where they are undergoing interrogation.

In the Masbate encounter, the Army's 9th Scout Ranger Co. under Capt. Christopher Morales killed Christopher D. Mericles, alias Ka Fernando Medrioles, 23, of Barangay Armenia, Uson, Masbate.

Mericles was believed to be one of four new NPA recruits who were chanced upon by the soldiers in Sitio Luwacan, Barangay Paraiso, Milagros town.

His body was brought to the Milagros police station where it was claimed by his parents, Celso and Felisa Medrioles. *With Ronnie Lorejo, Joyce Mejillano and Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Leftist peasant groups pick Loren

By Volt Contreras

LEFTIST peasant groups yesterday endorsed opposition vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda for her critical stand against globalization, the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement, and the American war on Iraq, as well as for her role in the peace process.

The party list group Anakpawis and allies Pamalakaya, Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas and Amihan said they expect Legarda to keep her "independent mind" on various issues should she serve under a fresh term of President Macapagal or a new administration.

The four groups said their members could muster up to a million votes for the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino candidate, whom they described to be "superior" to rival Noli "Kabayan" de Castro of the administration's K4 ticket.

Reached on the phone from a campaign sortie in Pangasinan, Legarda thanked her latest endorsers for agreeing with her positions on issues. "The Left endorses candidates out of principle," she said.

Opposition questions P6.2M check for Nora; a canard, says Palace

By Carlito Pablo

A CHECK allegedly made out to superstar Nora Aunor for P6.2 million as payment for "services rendered" to the government turned up at the office of the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) yesterday morning, prompting the camp of its presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr to question the use of public money for President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign.

The opposition had been hitting Ms Macapagal for allegedly using government resources in her election campaign.

But Malacañang immediately called the story "another canard from the lowliest purveyors of black propaganda."

"The truth is the Office of the President issued a check for P620,000 on Sept. 3, 2003 in favor of Ms Nora C. Villamayor (Aunor's real name) for services rendered and expenses incurred in the outreach programs of the government, including the advocacy of programs for the urban poor," said Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye.

"If the documents are authentic and she was paid this staggering amount, the public deserves to know what services were rendered by Ms Aunor to warrant this much," said lawyer Hector Villacorta, KNP secretariat chief who said photocopies of the disbursement voucher and the check for Aunor were slipped under the door of the KNP headquarters yesterday morning.

Aunor had come out strongly to endorse President Macapagal's bid for a full six-year term in the May 10 elections.

The disbursement voucher sent to the KNP camp dated March 4, 2004 showed it was prepared by the Office of the President, with a LandBank of the Philippines check for P6.2 million released on the same day. The check bore the signatures of Leonila Sioson, director of finance at the Office of the President and Waldo Flores, senior Deputy Executive Secretary.

Aunor authorized a certain Dr. Arturo Aguas to encash the check according to the documents.

Saying they had the original returned check on file for inspection "any time", Bunye added that "foisting the forgery shows the depths of despair encountered by the political opponents of the President."

El Shaddai, 'Couples' issue denials

By Blanche S. Rivera

YESTERDAY brought denials galore from some people perceived to command group votes.

The Catholic charismatic organization Couples for Christ denied it was endorsing the candidacy of President Macapagal-Arroyo, and said no single political party or candidate could claim its support.

Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, Archbishop of Cebu, denied text messages being sent around saying he was backing Bro. Eddie Villanueva.

El Shaddai, another Catholic charismatic group, denied it had prepared a list of senatorial candidates to endorse to its 1.5 million followers.

CFC national director Frank Padilla said Speaker Jose de Venecia had interpreted the sentiments of individual members to mean that the whole organization was backing Ms Macapagal.

"We totally disagree with bloc voting," Padilla told the INQUIRER in a phone interview. "And the CFC remains non-partisan. But we are supportive of the President's programs, and she is supportive of our Gawad Kalinga (housing project for the poor). This could have been the source of the misunderstanding."

El Shaddai spokesperson Mel Robles said that there was "no such list" even among El Shaddai officials that indicates which candidates to vote for senator. He insisted that his group merely gave "guidance to those who seek it ... usually on the Saturday before elections."

On Saturday, Vidal issued a single-paragraph "disclaimer" with the seal of his office, saying: "Text messages have recently proliferated about my purported support for Bro. Eddie Villanueva ... I would like to unequivocally state that I have not declared my support for any candidate nor do I plan to do so."

Padilla stressed that the CFC was not like the Iglesia ni Cristo, which is known to vote as a bloc upon the dictate of its reclusive leader Eraño Manalo. However, he said, the leadership encouraged members to participate in the elections, and to educate themselves on candidates' qualifications.

Criteria set by Catholic church officials, such as Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales, were used as guide by the CFC, Padilla said. Rosales and the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines earlier urged Filipinos to consider competence and conscience over popularity.

Padilla said de Venecia could have spoken with a CFC member who was backing Ms Macapagal and deduced that it was the whole group's sentiment.

Villanueva's spokesperson, Luis Sison, is the head of a CFC area in Metro Manila. He has vowed to resign from the CFC if the group breaks its policy and endorses a presidential bet.

Paul Hubahib, a member of CFC's Elder's Core Group in Cebu, admitted that most of the 18,000 members in the province were inclined to vote for Ms Macapagal. But he said these were individual decisions, not an official CFC stand. *With Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Supreme Court set to rule on case of battered wife

By Philip C. Tubeza

CAN A WOMAN charged with killing her husband get an acquittal if she claims to suffer from Battered Woman Syndrome (BWS)? Can she get off the hook without proof that she did it in self-defense as defined by the Revised Penal Code?

The Supreme Court is set to decide on the question after it ordered the Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) to comment on the appeal of Rema P. de la Cruz who was convicted of parricide by the Lingayen, Pangasinan, Regional Trial Court.

In her appeal, De la Cruz said the lower court failed to appreciate the justifying circumstance of self-defense, claiming that she was a battered wife suffering from BWS when she killed her husband.

The SC ordered De la Cruz and the OSG to comment on how Republic Act 9262, known as "An Act Defining Violence Against Women and their Children, Providing for Protective Measures for Victims, Prescribing Penalties therefore and Other Purposes," would affect her case.

RA 9262 clears BWS "victims-survivors" of any criminal and civil liability despite the absence of any element of justifying circumstances of self-defense under the Revised Penal Code.

Last January, the SC affirmed the conviction for parricide of Marivic Genosa but reduced her penalty from death to an indeterminate prison sentence after she anchored her defense for killing her husband on RA 9262.

In the Genosa case, the tribunal defined a battered woman as one "who is repeatedly subjected to any forceful physical or psychological behavior by a man in order to coerce her to do something he wants her to do without concern for her rights."

"Battered women include wives or women in any form of intimate relationship with men. Furthermore, in order to be classified as a battered woman, the couple must go through the battering cycle at least twice," the SC said.

"Any woman may find herself in an abusive relationship with a man once. If it occurs a second time, and she remains in the situation, she is defined as a battered woman," the court added.

4 killed in Boracay

THREE foreigners, including two Germans, and a Filipino maid were found stabbed to death Monday in an apparent robbery in Boracay, police said.

Anton Faustenhauser, a German who owned a bar on the island resort, his German guest Manfred Schoeni, a still unidentified Caucasian man and a Filipino maid were found dead in Faustenhauser's house in Balabag village, police officer Charlie Blansa said.

Neighbors found the bodies after they were alarmed by the foul smell from Faustenhauser's home, said another police officer Russel Homicillada.

No suspects have been identified and no motive has been established, although the possibility of a robbery was being investigated, said a police officer who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The time of the attack has also not been determined, police said. *AP*

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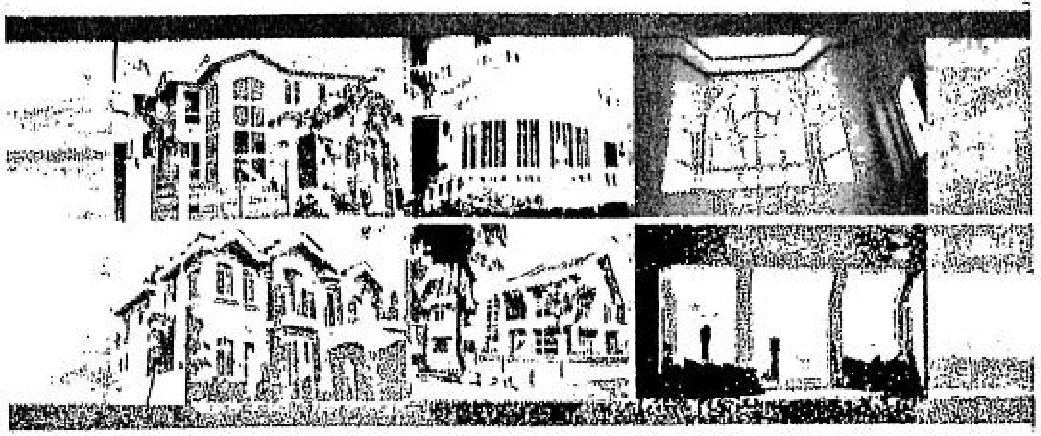

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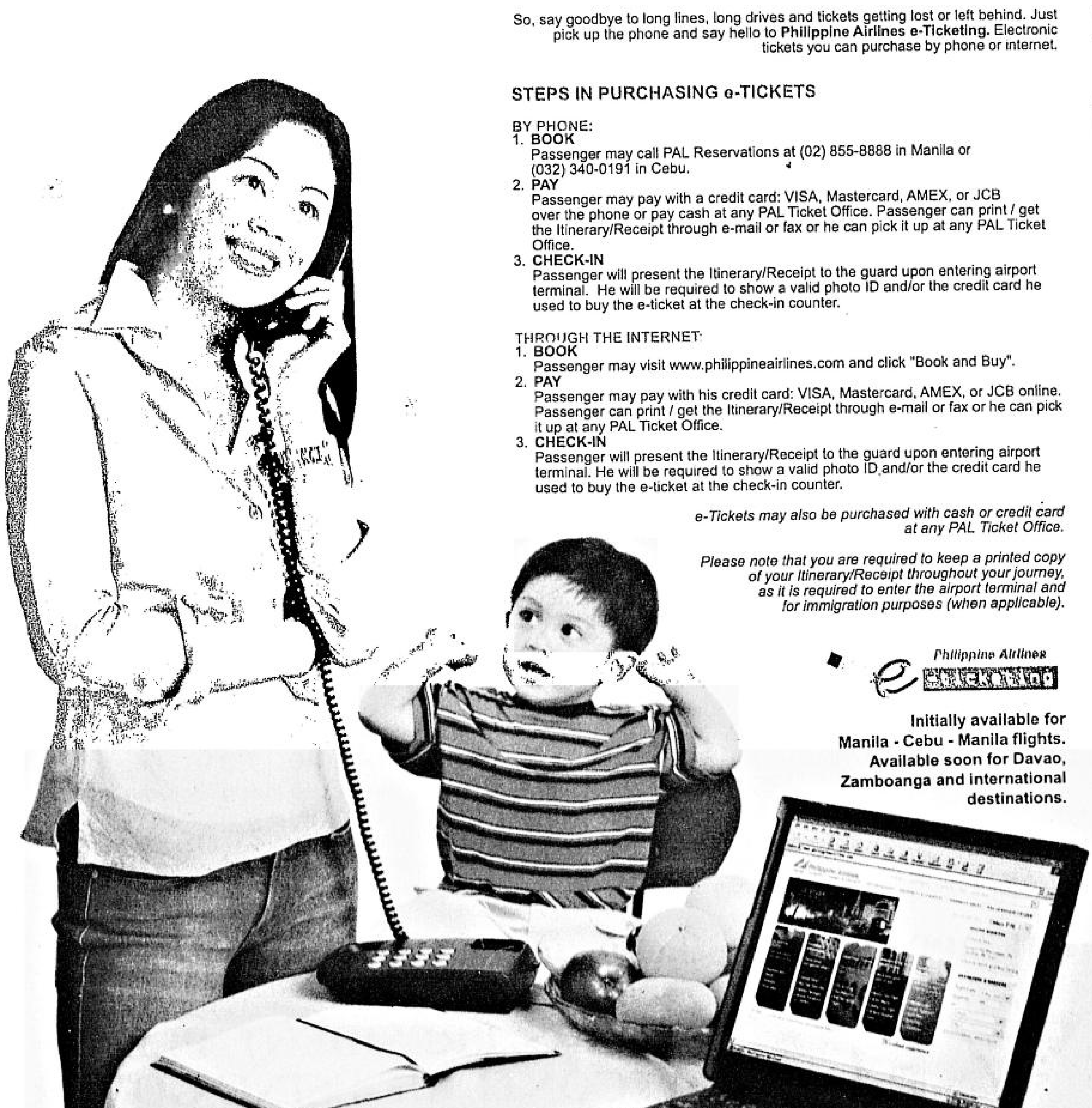

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Etta says NPA rebels out to get her

From page A1

At the news conference, Rosales said she did not fear for her own life, although she had requested PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. to give her family protection.

Other Akbayan leaders, like Joel Rocamora, Ronald Llamas and Risa Hontiveros, were present at the news conference.

Presidential Commission on Good Government Chair Haydee Yorac, government peace negotiator Rene Sarmiento, newspaper columnist Randy David, Sister Nida Pineda and Fr. Robert Reyes also attended.

"In elections, there is no room for intimidation, coercion, violence and the killing of anyone who peacefully participates in the exercise," said Yorac, a former chair of the Commission on Elections.

Rosales said she incurred the ire of the CPP-NPA because she lobbied for a bill that sought to make the NPA collection of "permit-to-campaign" fees a criminal act. Many legislators supported the bill, but it failed to pass in the House of Representatives.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines on April 16 took out a newspaper ad denouncing the NPA collection of fees from candidates who wished to campaign in rebel strongholds.

In a series of media statements, Rosal defended the "permit-to-campaign" fees imposed by the NPA as "insignificant" sums compared to the total campaign expenses of candidates. In recent radio interviews, however, he accused Akbayan of collaborating with the military in the killing of Bayan Muna activists.

"That's a complete lie," Rosales said of Rosal's allegations. As chair of the House committee on human rights, she said she would call for an investigation of the murders.

"The only reason for the CPP-NPA's malicious assertions about Akbayan is our exposure of the armed communist movement's own share of criminal and unjust practices," Rosales said in a separate statement.

Biggest threat

By extorting money from candidates of all stripes, communist guerrillas are now considered by the military to be the biggest threat to the May 10 elections.

A briefing paper by the Armed Forces noted that despite peace overtures by the government, "the communist insurgency has continued to thrive and sow terror in guerrilla strongholds."

The paper said communist rebels had also taken advantage of government funds through the Bayan Muna party-list group in Congress, even as the flow of funds from abroad had slowed after the NPA was branded a terrorist organization by the US government.

The NPA's 8,890-strong guerrilla force has a presence in more than 2,000 villages in the vote-rich countryside, where the rebels extort "permit-to-campaign" fees from politicians.

The NPA's "terrorist atrocities" also appeared to have increased in recent years, and have outnumbered their so-called tactical guerrilla operations.

From January to March alone, the NPA has exacted P6 million in "permit-to-campaign fees" from politicians compared to the P12 million it had earned from such fees in the 2001 mid-term elections.

Another P20 million have also been exacted from business establishments in rural areas. The NPA punished companies who refused its demands, destroying their infrastructure and other equipment such as buses and mobile telephone broadcast sites worth P32 million.

"They are the biggest threat to the polls. They are not only disrupting our elections but also our development projects," Armed Forces spokesperson Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero told AFP.

"They are also undermining the sanctity of our political process by not allowing those who can't afford to campaign freely," Lucero stressed.

The entire 130,000-strong military force would be placed on the highest state of alert during the polls, he said.

No unilateral suspension of military offensives would be declared, Lucero said. "That is for the best interest of the country. To ensure honest and credible elections, we have to continue operations against the NPA."

Already, several mayors, congressmen and a governor were ambushed by NPA guerrillas in the run-up to the polls, the military said.

The most daring attacks were the assassination of Vice Mayor Joy Magsino in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro, and the ambush of Rep. Josephine Sato in Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro. Sato, an ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo, suffered a minor head wound.

Warning

NPA spokesperson Jorge Madlos on Friday warned candidates they would be shot if they employed armed bodyguards or police and military escorts on the campaign trail.

"As election day gets nearer, we reiterate our call on all the political campaigners not to violate the policy of an arms ban in (rebel) areas," Madlos said in a statement dictated over the telephone to the Agence France Presse office in Manila.

Madlos said the NPA "will not hesitate to enforce the political authority of the revolutionary movement."

"The NPA will undertake measures either to disarm them, or if they resist, the NPA will not hesitate to use their arms," he said.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales earlier accused three Bayan Muna legislators of allegedly funneling up to P50 million in state funds annually to the NPA since 2001. The legislators have denied the charge.

"They are using the money to strengthen the armed struggle," Gonzales said, branding the NPA the "biggest threat to democracy." *Reports from Dona Pazzibugan; Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; and AFP*

YES, PRESIDENT GLORIA HAS BEEN USING GOVERNMENT FUNDS ...TO HELP THE POOR.

KALSADA NATIN, AALAGAAN NATIN (KANAN): Jobs for the unskilled and unemployed

Mandated under RA 8794 of 1999, the program employed some 300,000 people who were otherwise jobless and unskilled, with total wages paid amounting to more than P1.4 billion, from October 2003 to March 2004.

EXPANDED PHILHEALTH PROGRAM: Free health care for the indigents

About 5 million indigent and poor families, equivalent to about 25 million individuals, were provided with health insurance by President Gloria under the National Health Insurance Program instituted under RA 7875. About P3 billion has been allotted for the program by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) and the Department of Budget and Management. About 65 million Filipinos are now assured of affordable health care services under the program.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE FUND FOR A STRONG REPUBLIC (SAFE4SR): Quick loans for college students

As of April 2004 some 25,000 students were provided assistance under the SAFE4SR program. The program extended loans to graduating college students to P8,000 per semester, payable starting two years after graduation. A total of P500 million has been allocated for the program.

GSIS SUMMER-ONE-MONTH-SALARY (SOS) LOAN PROGRAM: Assistance to ordinary government workers

About 800,000 government employees benefited from ths SOS program. A total of P8.5 billion was released as of April 2004 which tremendously helped alleviate the country's civil servants.

PATUBIG SA BARANGAY PROGRAM: Access to clean water for the urban poor

As of April 20, 2004, more than 800,000 urban poor households in Metro Manila and provinces of Rizal, Cavite and Bulacan were provided with clean water using earnings of PAGCOR.

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PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Rosales bags first LPGA title, wins ₱13 million

From page A1

her 14-under aggregate of 274 and a horde of pursuers, Rosales went through an agonizing wait of almost an hour before she finally became a winner.

"It was tough watching them (the other players). I tried much not to watch and kept my head somewhere else. I even called my mom to talk to her," she said of the tension-filled lull at the Eagle's Landing Country Club.

SUSPENSE builds up for eventual tournament winner Rosales as she waits for her rivals to finish their round. AP

The world's top female golf player, Annika Sorenstam, fell short with a 71-278 and settled for a tie for 10th. So did one of the tour's hottest players, Grace Park (68), Rosie Jones (67), Jung Yeon Lee (65) and Becky Morgan, who figured in a four-way tie for second at 275.

Morgan, scoring a 68, came closest to forging a playoff with Rosales but pulled her birdie try on the last hole.

When it was all over, Rosales was at a loss for words but made sure to pay tribute to her mom, Lourdes, on ESPN's live coverage that was beamed worldwide.

Erstwhile leader Aree Song, the rookie who was four shots ahead of Rosales going into the last round, stumbled to a 78 and even finished five shots behind the Filipina.

4th rank

In Manila, Rosales' swing coach, Bong Lopez, said her decision to part ways with her longtime caddie paid off.

"She got back her confidence reading the greens working with her new caddie, Donna. And to think that it's only their first tournament together," Lopez said.

The big payoff sent Rosales' ranking skyrocketing on the ADT money list from a lowly 37th to fourth, with winnings of $288,562 (about P16 million).

"I'll go shopping till I drop," she said of the big fortune that suddenly fell on her lap.

Aside from a Rolex watch traditionally given to first-time winners, Rosales earned a two-year exemption on the LPGA Tour.

Filipino-American Dorothy Delasin, who had overshadowed Jennifer by scoring three victories the past four years, did not play.

In Manila, President Macapagal-Arroyo and Philippine Sports Commission Chair Eric Buhain sent congratulatory messages to Jennifer.

The final scores:

274—Jennifer Rosales 70-70-69-65

275—Jung Yeon Lee 71-66-73-65, Grace Park 66-70-71-68, Becky Morgan 67-72-68-68, Rosie Jones 72-66-70-67

276—Mi Hyun Kim 70-67-69-70

277—Natalie Gulbis 70-66-72-69, Se Ri Pak 68-71-68-70, Rachel Teske 70-69-68-70

278—Kate Golden 73-71-70-64, Lorena Ochoa 68-71-68-71, Michele Redman 70-68-70-70, Annika Sorenstam 71-69-67-71

279—Lorie Kane 67-68-73-71, Janice Moodie 69-71-68-71, Reilley Rankin 70-68-71-70, Christina Kim 65-74-70-70, .Shi Hyun Ahn 73-68-71-67

280—Meg Mallon 69-70-70-71, Catriona Matthew 68-73-71-68, Pat Hurst 74-69-67-70

283—Karen Stupples 75-70-71-67, Isabelle Beisiegel 72-66-73-72, Aree Song 69-66-70-78

284—Soo Yun Kang 74-72-68-70, Jeong Jang 69-70-71-74

285—Seol An Jeon 71-73-70-71, A.J. Eathorne 71-74-69-71

286—Suzann Pettersen 72-71-71-72, Nancy Harvey 71-68-71-76

287—Hee-Won Han 74-68-70-75, Giulia Sergas 73-73-73-68, Laura Davies 70-74-75-68, Young Kim 70-7[illegible]-68-77

289—Suzanne Strudwick 70-77-73-69, Mardi Lunn 73-68-71-78

290—Yu Ping Lin 74-71-75-70

291—Paula Marti 70-76-71-74, Eva Dahllof 72-71-75-73

292—Michelle Ellis 73-70-73-76, Luciana Bemvenuti 75-71-71-75, Joanne Morley 72-74-72-74

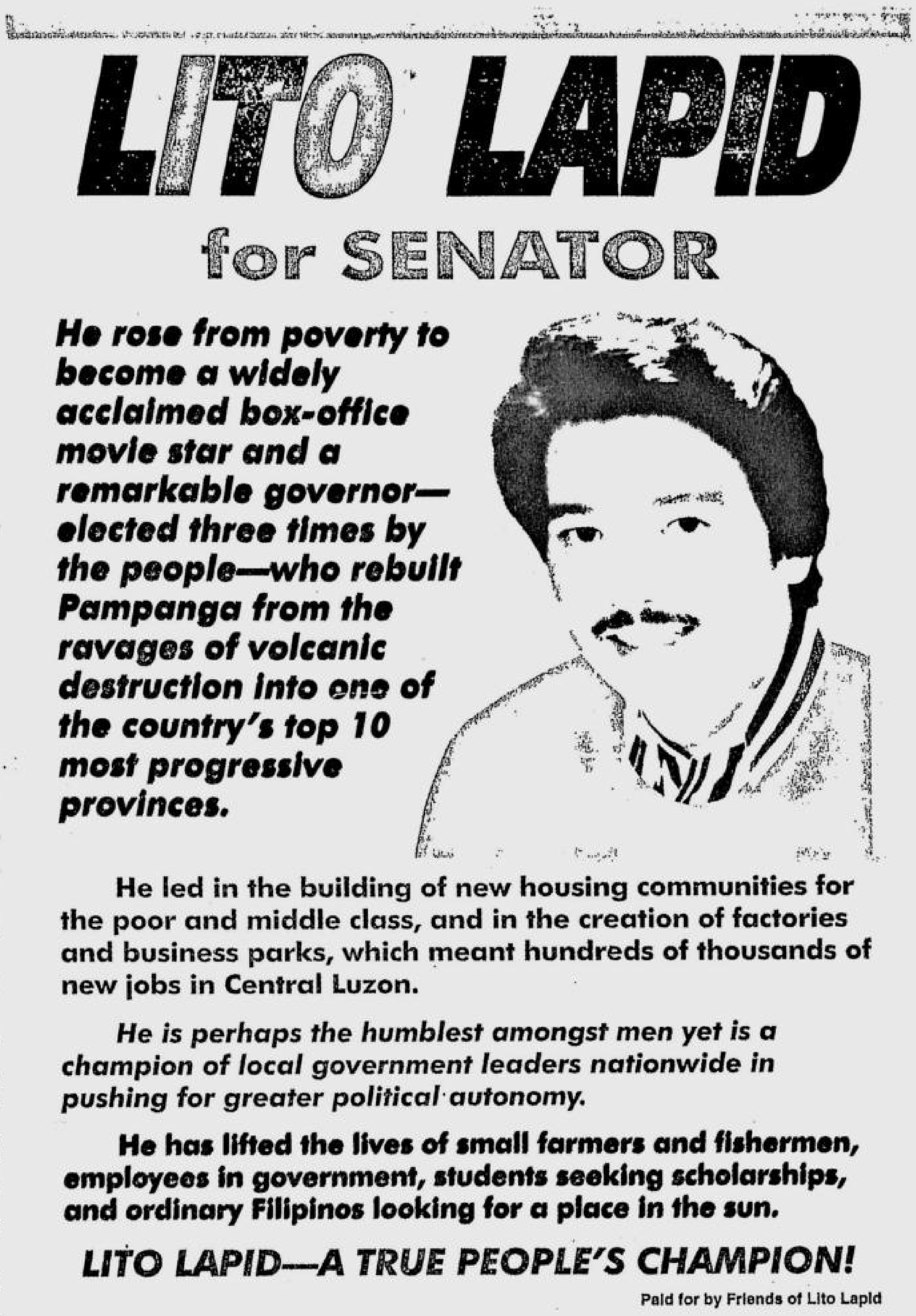
293—Young-A Yang 74-73-72-74, Ju Mi Kim 72-75-72-74, Riko Higashio 74-71-74-74, Loraine Lambert 74-73-74-72, Marisa Baena 73-72-75-73

294—Nadina Taylor 73-74-73-74, Marlene Hedblom 73-74-74-73

295—Silvia Cavalleri 74-73-73

296—Candie Kung 74-70-76-76, Patricia Meunier-Lebouc 76-70-77-73

Jong Arcano with Inquirer wires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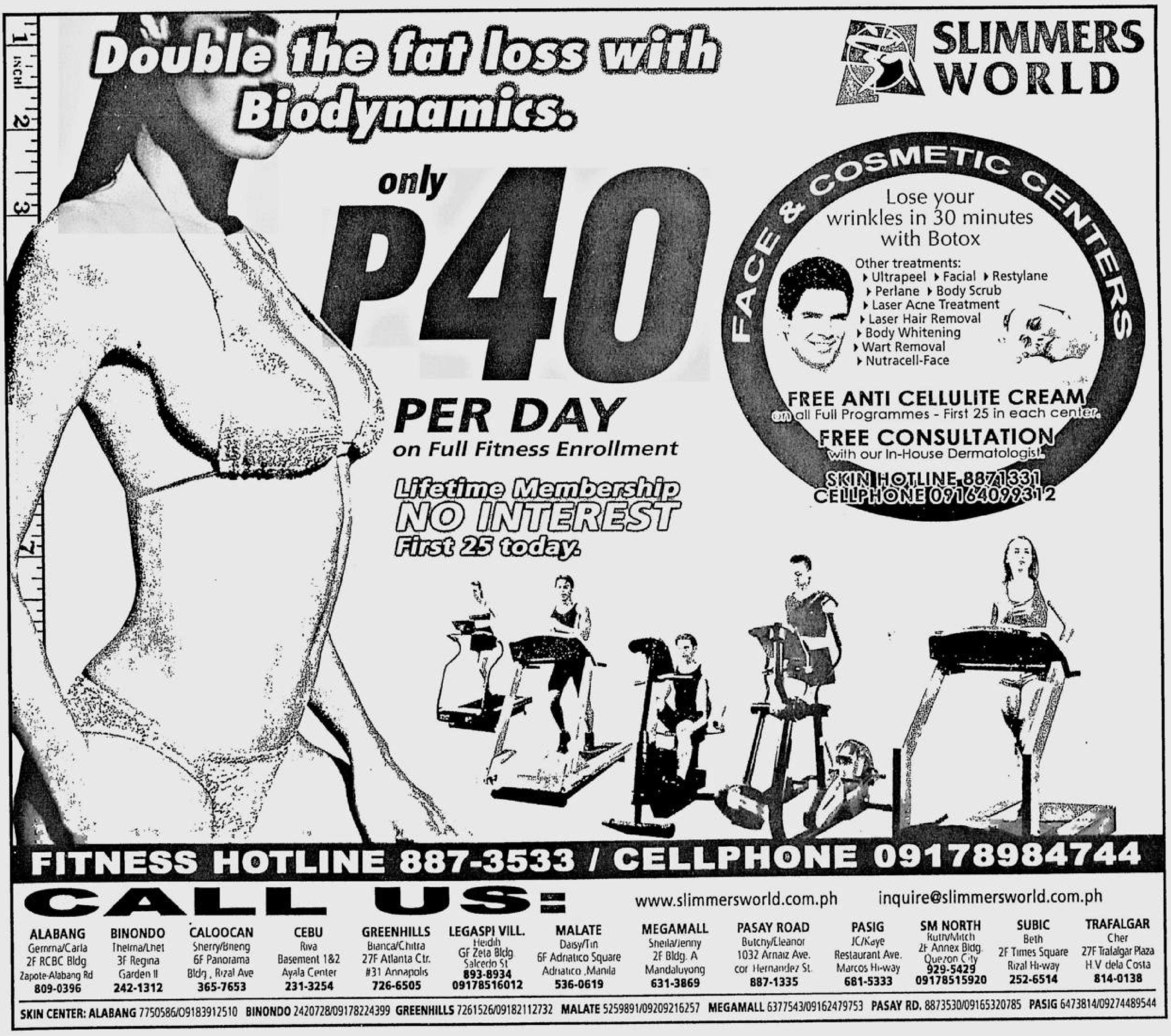
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Joma warns attacks vs Left to escalate war

By Delfin Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—Self-exiled communist leader Jose Ma. Sison warned on Sunday that the New People's Army rebels would escalate its war against the government unless the attacks against leftist activists are immediately stopped.

"It destroys any amount of confidence that has been built in the GRP-NDF peace negotiations. It serves to justify the continuity and intensification of the people's revolutionary armed struggle for national liberation and democracy," Sison said in a statement furnished to the INQUIRER.

The government and communist rebels are set to resume formal peace talks in June aimed at ending the decades-old conflict.

Sison said the military and police must stop immediately the murder and intimidation of members and leaders of progressive parties which are vying seats in Congress as party-list representatives.

"Ms Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo must heed this demand. The broad masses of the people, including human rights, ecumenical and other organizations, have joined the progressive parties in making the demand," Sison said.

He added that the leadership and negotiating panel of the National Democratic Front consider the demand serious and urgent.

Last month, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales accused former Bayan Muna party-list representatives Satur Ocampo, Crispin Beltran and Liza Maza of diverting a total of P50 million of their 'pork barrel' funds yearly to the NPA since 2001.

But the militant solons denied the accusations. The NPA is the armed wing of the CPP.

Sison pointed out that the continuing campaign against the progressive parties involves serious implications and consequences.

Sison noted that because the progressive parties are expected to win at least 10 to 12 party-list seats as shown by major poll surveys, "they are now the target of an official campaign of fraud and terrorism."

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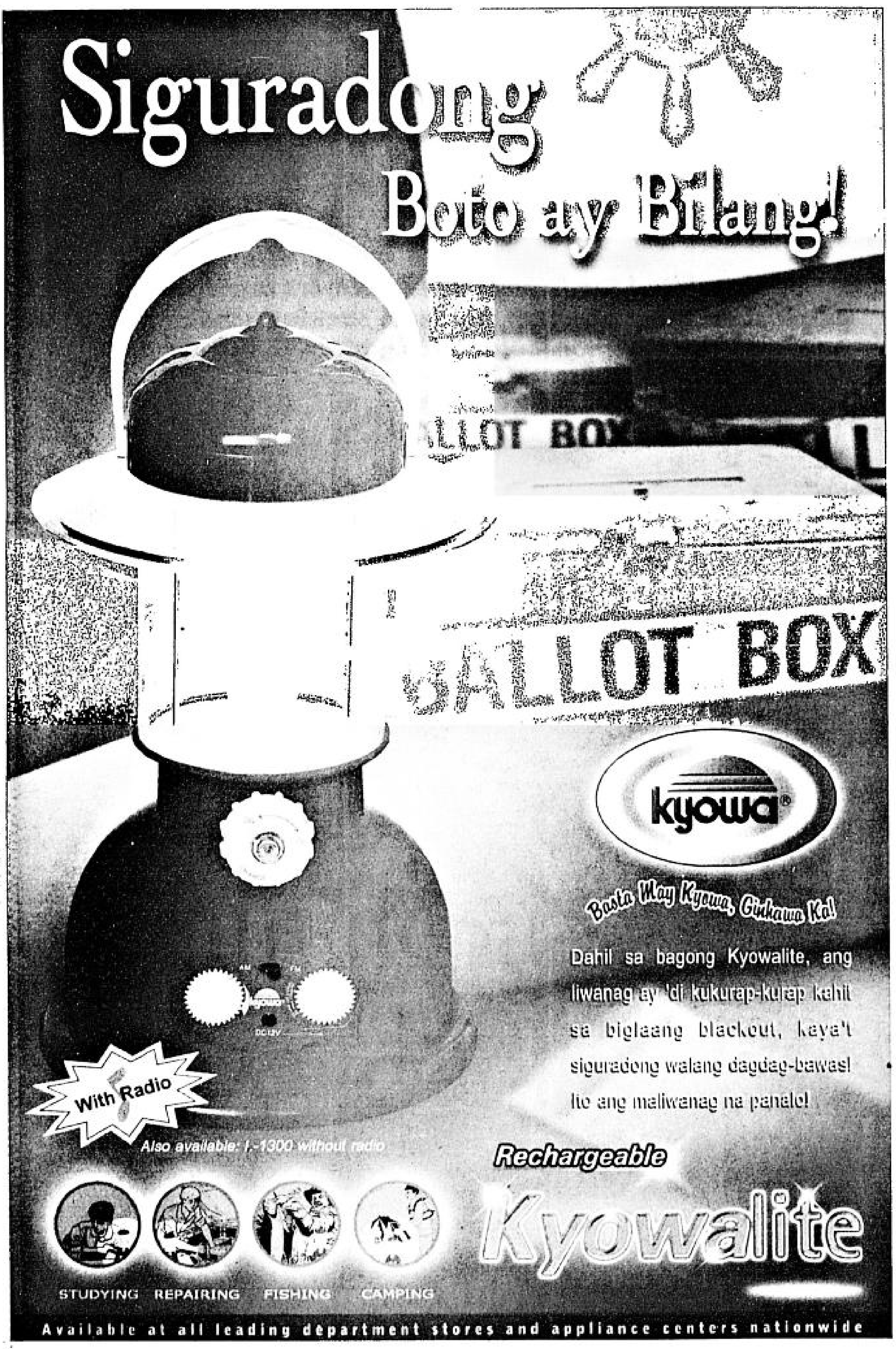
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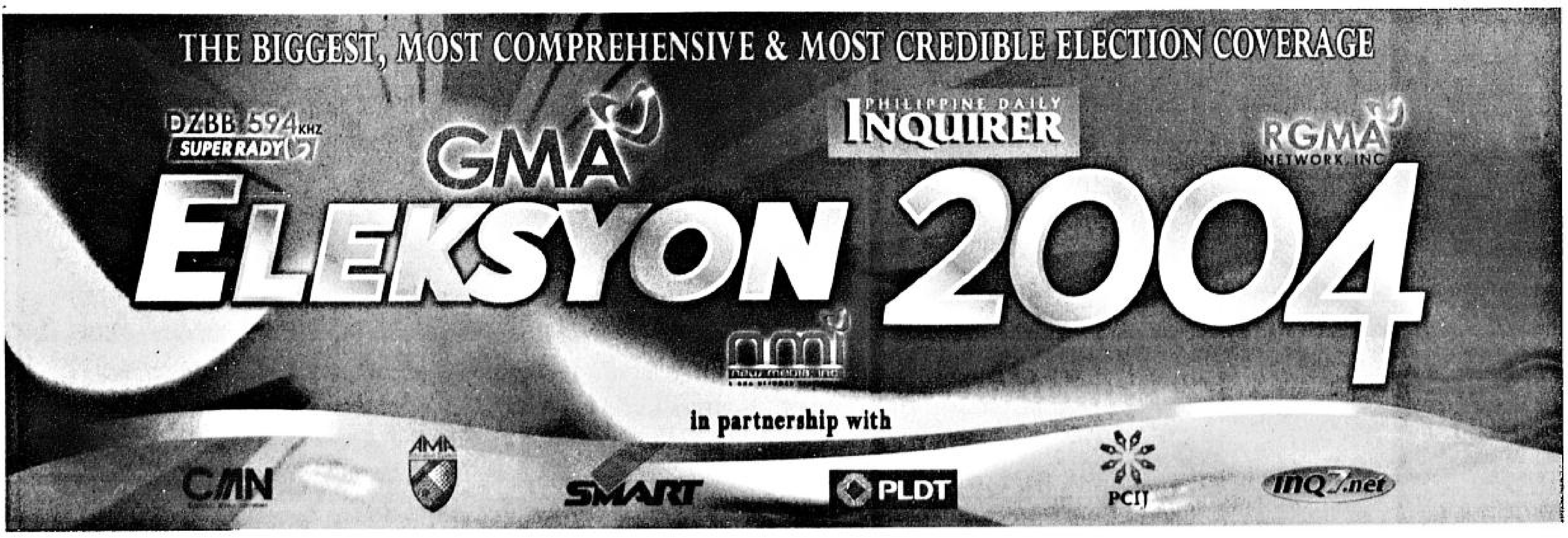
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Iraq exec asks RP to keep contingent

By G. Cabacungan Jr

A VISITING Iraqi minister has appealed to the Philippine government to keep its humanitarian contingent in Iraq despite the recent killing of a Filipino civilian in a bomb attack.

In a briefing at Malacañang, Iraqi Minister for Municipalities and Public Works Nesreen Siddeek Barwari said: "We in Iraq will not forget the kindness of the Filipinos and we would deeply appreciate the continued stay of your humanitarian team which has become very close to the hearts of all Iraqis."

President Macapagal-Arroyo has not budged from her policy to help rebuild Iraq even after several countries have decided to pull out their troops following the failure of coalition forces to ensure the safety of their nationals.

Barwari, the only woman in the 25-member Iraqi Governing Council, also expressed the Council's condolences to the family of Rodrigo Reyes, a civilian contractor who became the first Filipino to be killed in Iraq. The killing has bolstered calls for the withdrawal of the Philippine contingent in Iraq.

During her stay, Barwari is expected to discuss with government officials how the Philippines could fill up Iraq's need for a working force in the coming years especially when the reconstruction efforts start by next year.

"We are very willing to take advantage of your good people and good experience that you have developed over the years," said Barwari.

Barwari said that she and her staff of 42,000 in the ministry would need all the technical expertise they could get specifically in engineering, design, urban development, administration, budgeting, proper land use, water and sanitation, and waste management.

Sultan of Sulu backs Bro. Eddie for president

By Julie Alipala and Noralyn Mustafa
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The Sultan of Sulu and Borneo has endorsed Bangon Pilipinas bet Eddie Villanueva for the presidency.

His Royal Highness Sultan Mohammad Ismael Kiram III made public his support for Villanueva during a meeting he hosted at the Garden Orchid Hotel here last Friday.

From a sortie in Northern Mindanao, Villanueva was on his way to a rally at the Plaza Pershing but the Sultan insisted on meeting him.

Sultan Kiram said he decided to endorse the televangelist because he was the only candidate who had not sought his endorsement.

"Many of those who seek the presidency have come to me for my endorsement. Some have offered very enticing promises, but their agenda is only for their selfish gain and for the political party they are beholden to," he said.

Without naming names, he said some of the politicians "promised my people a future that they cannot and will not deliver because the future of this country is the least of their priorities. I am tired of seeing my people's hopes being dashed over and over again," he added. *With a report from Ryan D. Rosauro*

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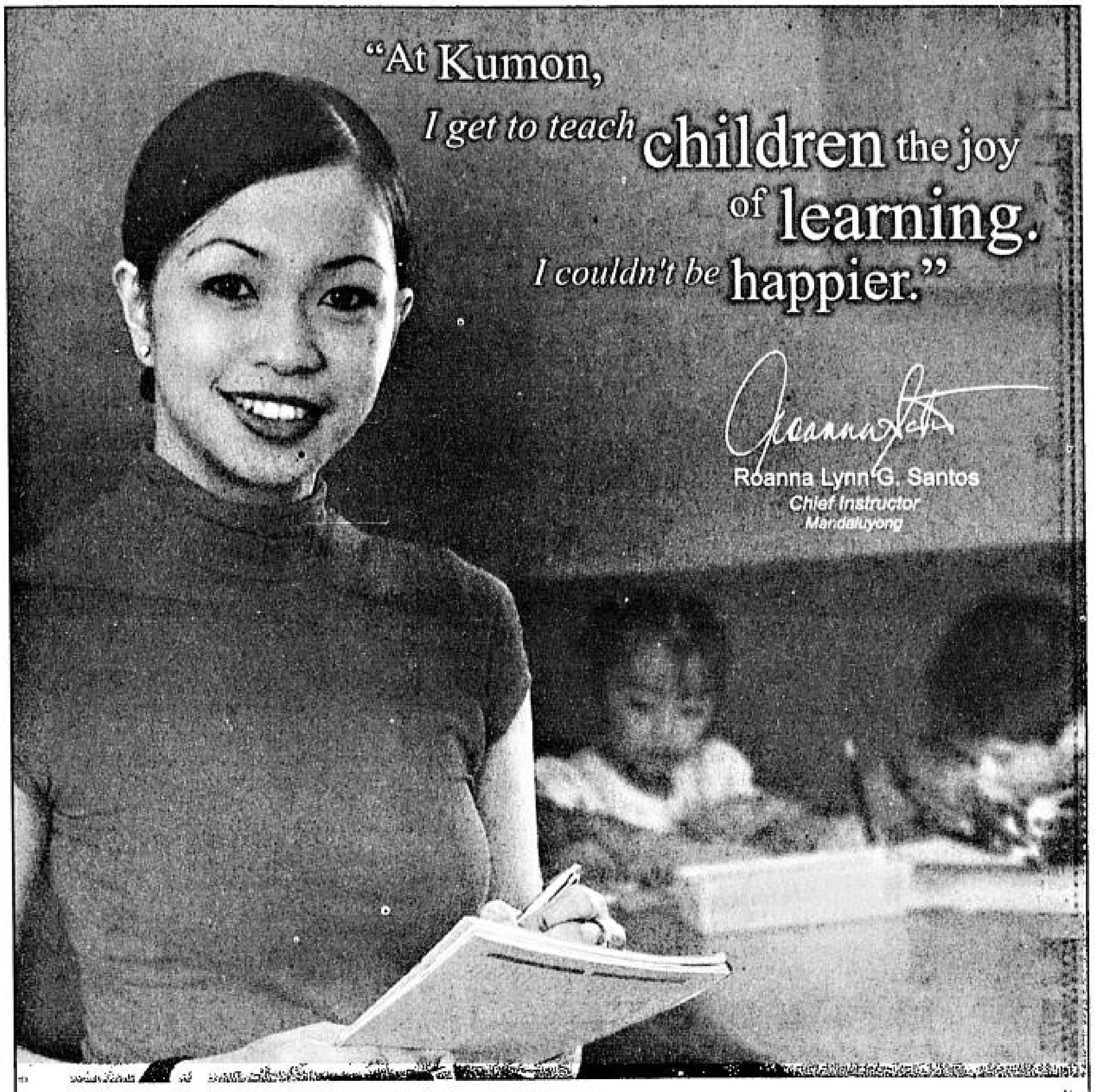
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Niretoke.
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Halalan 2004
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Ngayon, sa Halalan 2004, may sistema ang Comelec laban sa dagdag-bawas.
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Joker statement, TV report irk 'Da King'

From page A1

before May 10.

Yesterday, an irked Poe attacked the administration and confronted a television reporter in the same rapid Q&A with media.

Reacting to the call of Sen. Joker Arroyo on Sunday for voters to take a chance on President Macapagal-Arroyo because "Poe (was) just plain hopeless," the actor shot back: "They don't know what they're talking about."

Arroyo said it was easier to get rid of a president who was corrupt than one who didn't have "the intellectual wherewithal for leadership."

Earlier, before the crowd gathered for the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino rally in Anda town, Poe said he read Arroyo's statement in the newspapers.

The actor, who is known as "Da King" in the movie industry, demanded to know: Why should the people reelect Ms Macapagal after the way she ran the country in the past three years? *"Ano ang* platform *na pinakita nila* (what platform are they crowing about)? Mismanagement at corruption *lang*."

His platform of "action, not words" was definitely better, Poe insisted. Asked to elaborate, he said his administration would be a "totally" transparent one.

As for his chances of winning at this point, the actor was optimistic. "We always hope for the best, *kung saan man 'yun* (wherever that is)," he said.

He refused to speculate on whether religious groups would reconsider the endorsements they had made.

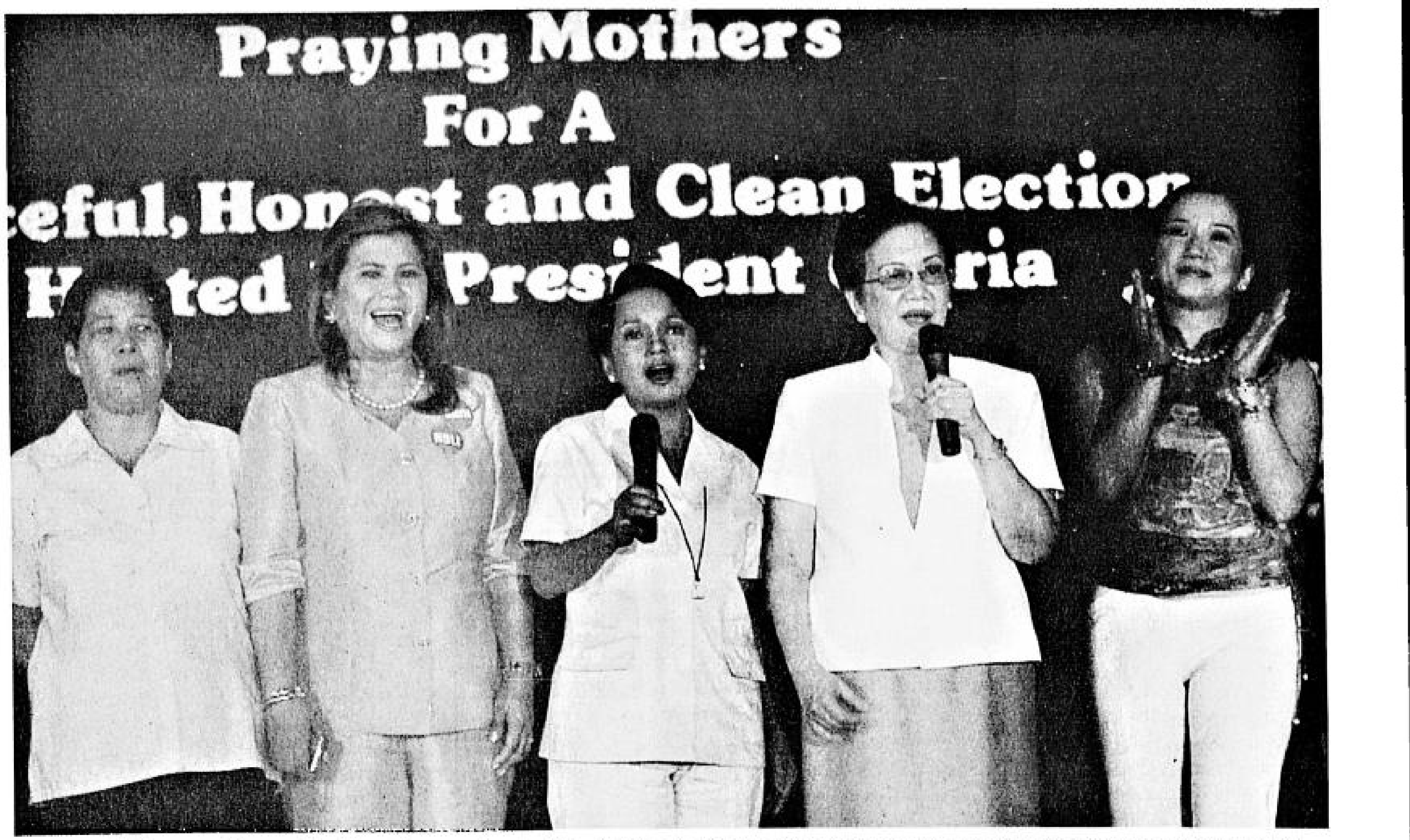
"I would rather not comment on that," he said, and then suddenly turned to GMA 7 reporter Sandra Aguinaldo: *"Baka sabihin binato na naman ako* (they might again say I was pelted with stones."

Aguinaldo was the same reporter whom Poe berated during a rally in Iloilo for standing too close to him onstage. This time, he was a little miffed about a report she made last week that said the crowds threw things at him during a motorcade held in Imus, Cavite, bailiwick of breakaway opposition standard-bearer Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Poe told Aguinaldo that she got it all wrong, that it was fruit sap that landed on his head at the time, and nothing more. He said his friend, movie actor Eddie Garcia, who had joined the motorcade, even tried to remove the dirt with wet tissue paper.

But, Aguinaldo protested, her cameraman had footage to prove that Poe had been pelted. At this point, Poe's personal campaign manager, Sen. Vicente Sotto III, butted in and made matters far from better.

"Alam mo (you know)," Sotto told the reporter, *"nakita ko 'yung video n'yo, pinanood ko ... wala, e. Mahilig kayong gumawa ng kasinungalingan* (I saw your video, I watched it; there was nothing there. You just like to fabricate lies)."


Praying Mothers
For A
eful, Hon st and Clean Election
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PRESIDENT Macapagal, former President Corazon Aquino, Gina de Venecia, Ma. Lourdes Baybay and Kris Aquino sing on stage as they plead for the holding of peaceful, honest and clean elections during the gathering of "Praying Mothers" at the Miriam College in Quezon City. PCPO-MALACAÑANG

5 bets invited to Mass for credible polls

From page A1

... agreed and she will attend the Mass on Sunday," Aquino told the prayer gathering.

Bro. Eddie Villanueva had likewise accepted the invitation, according to Aquino's spokesperson, Ma. Lourdes Siytangco.

"If I receive the invitation, then I will go," Sen. Panfilo Lacson told the INQUIRER. "I'm still a Catholic."

Actor Fernando Poe Jr. and former Education Secretary Raul Roco had yet to give their answers.

During yesterday's gathering, Aquino, a "People Power" icon, prayed for three things: that election officials would be enlightened in the performance of their duties "so that they will do what is right and what is just in order to truly serve the Filipino nation;" that candidates would be "humble, kind, just and accountable to their constituents;" and that voters would choose only the best qualified aspirants.

Ms Macapagal urged all mothers, "givers and nurturers of life, (to) lead the prayer for peaceful and credible elections."

She announced the arrival of American observers in the country, and asked Foreign Secretary Delia Albert to invite observers from Europe and the other Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries as well.

Ms Macapagal challenged the opposition: "Join me in inviting other countries to witness our election so that all talk about cheating would be proven baseless."

Roco's eyes still engaging, grip still firm, heart still on fire

From page A1

Just the same, in the 15 days that Roco was gone, Alyansa traipsed around Metro Manila and the nearby provinces, flew to Palawan, and then came back to rake through Cavite and Quezon provinces. In most of these sorties, either Rex Roco or Raul Roco Jr. stepped into their absent father's shoes and took his place beside Aquino.

"Babalik po ba (Is he coming back)?" was a recurrent question from emotional supporters, and the invariable response was, *"Nangako po siya, huwag kayong mag-alala* (He gave his word, don't worry)." Others didn't ask. Instead, they chanted, from the roadside during a motorcade or from a perch during a rally, *"Tuloy ang laban* (On with the fight), Roco-Aquino!"

Members of the Women for Roco movement went on their own jaunts in Batangas, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac and Pangasinan. In the words of W4R's Lydia Castillo: "We never faltered. We doubled our efforts and enthusiasm."

Outside of the coordinated activities, members of the senatorial slate went campaigning individually. Jay Sonza said he reached "many places, as far as the Visayas, where I had to explain the situation to many people, and assure them that Alyansa was not giving up."

Chavez, acknowledged as the hardest working in the group, was driven harder. "When the others rested, I was restless," he said. "During the sortie in Quezon, after our schedule in several towns, I stayed behind to do the other towns. *Sinuyod ko ang buong probinsiya* (I combed the whole province). In Davao, Mayor Rodrigo Duterte took me along on his own sorties. I'm No. 1 on his list."

Melanio "Batas" Mauricio returned to the warpath on the side, busying himself with the two complaints for graft and plunder that he earlier filed against President Macapagal-Arroyo for Malacañang's alleged bailout of the Lopez-owned Maynilad Water Services.

Edno Joson wisely adopted a "wait-and-see" attitude. "I did not stop campaigning, but I did not allow myself to be overly optimistic, either. It was clear to me that so much would depend on Raul's return."

No one knew Roco's condition for sure, or at least that was the official line. Party members authorized to speak on the matter delivered the same statement in as many ways as creatively possible: Roco would personally announce the true state of both his health and his presidential bid as soon as possible.

Robbie Pierre "Bobbit" Roco, the former senator's 36-year-old lawyer son, said family members left behind in Manila banked largely on a "tradition" of full confidence.

"Our family is used to any one member going off somewhere in pursuit of something, and everyone else is allowed to presume that he is all right," he explained. "But the rule is, bad news is sent to the family at once. So, no news is good news for us."

First and final R&R

Two nights before the political homecoming of the year, Aquino celebrated his birthday belatedly with a cozy karaoke party for his slate mates and "close-in" media men at the BMW showroom in Libis, Quezon City.

"This is our first R&R since the start of the campaign," Coo said over the din, with Mauricio singing "You're Just Too Good to be True" in the background, in all earnestness. "Maybe this is also our prelude to victory," she said.

Earlier in the day, the militant group Anakpawis announced it was endorsing four—Batas, Gatmaytan, Chavez and Joson—out of the seven Alyansa candidates.

They should be feeling upbeat; among the Alyansa's long-standing jokes was that they'd be happy with four senatorial victories, "*kasi* majority *na 'yon* (that would be the majority)." And yes, they ate, drank, pelted each other with the usual wisecracks—"Gat, *nakita mo ba si* (Have you seen) Chavez?"—and gamely queued up for turns at the videoke.

But only Aquino looked really relaxed in a way that had little to do with marking a birthday. "We're ready for anything," he said. "Whatever is in store on Wednesday is out of our hands." He swore that he knew only as much, or as little, as Roco's immediate family, which was probably why he had done so well dealing with media in the past week. "I just repeated all the facts relayed to me."

Aquino paused to wave at Sonza, who was doing a Louis Amstrong, "What a Wonderful World." Then he continued: "When Roco returns, we will have a few more sorties together, all of us. But overall, the strategy in this last leg of the campaign is to cover as much ground as possible by dispersing the candidates, who each has a bailiwick to secure. Also at this stage, it will be mostly a battle for media space."

Gatmaytan was now singing "My Way." His fellow candidates ribbed him about not reading the lyrics on the screen accurately. *"Tigilan n'yo 'ko* (Leave me alone)," the blind lawyer said between lines.

And then it was Aquino's turn at the videoke. He sang Cliff Richards' 1960s hit, "Constantly," while Gat heckled him, "More! More vitamins!" Bobbit Roco turned up with his wife, Obi (Cristina Obias), and tackled a Pinoy pop hit, Nonoy Zuñiga's "Never Ever Say Goodbye."

Rapport with reporters

"Now that he's away, he's everywhere," a newspaper columnist noted a few days after Roco left. Again, many theories would apply here, the most obvious being, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder."

Curiously enough, this was true for many of the journalists who had tailed Alyansa from Day One of the campaign.

"As a professional, I missed his very quotable quotes," said Wendell Vigilia of Malaya. "But work aside, I realized that I learned something from him every day."

Vigilia recounted the last long exchanges he had with Roco before the latter's departure on April 13: "We covered the campaign in Bohol before the Holy Week break, and then three of us—Mike (Ubac), (PDI photographer) Randy Hormillosa, and myself—stayed behind with him in his Panglao Island rest house. He was very unguarded around us, walking about in loose shorts and old shirts, engaging us in conversation every chance he got, which was often. He was excited most of all about the fireflies that lit up this tree in the backyard. One night we stayed up to see for ourselves and we were not disappointed.

More than once, they chanced upon Roco sitting by the water in such deep thought they didn't dare interrupt. "We agreed he deserved some quiet," Vigilia said.

Roco tried to stop them one morning, he recounted, when they were bound for the nearby Balicasag Island dive site. "He said anything we expected to see out there, we could find in Panglao, anyway. But when he saw we would not be dissuaded, he just said for us to be careful and not do anything as risky as he had done. 'Like what?' we asked. He paused for a split second, dripping wet because he had just emerged from snorkeling. Then he said, chuckling, 'Like, run for president.'"

The Star's Crisostomo was "not entirely surprised" when Roco made the crucial announcement. "After the sortie in Dipolog a few days before, I noticed he was a lot slower," she recalled. "So when he left and no one was 100-percent sure he would be back, I kept thinking it was such a pity; the man had worked very hard."

Patricia Estevez of the Manila Times shares with her subject a consuming interest in the written word—he has an AB English degree; she is taking up creative writing—which not even the Houston sojourn dampened.

"While he was away, I would text him to ask how he was. My attitude was, if I got a story, fine; if not, that was okay, too. Sometimes, I simply sent him lines from literary works that I liked, and he texted back his own favorite quotes from the same pieces. And maybe it was deliberate, maybe not, but I guess some of his messages were describing his frame of mind."

Estevez has kept two of these messages from Roco in her phone mailbox. From "The Love Story of J. Alfred Prufock" by T.S. Eliot: "There is time ... there is time ... in a minute there is time ... for decisions and revisions ... which a minute will revise." And from "Ithaca" (circa 1911) by the Greek poet Constantine P. Cavafy: "Do not fear the Lestrygonians ... for you can be protected by noble thoughts and fine feelings."

Did they get closer to the man than necessary?

The INQUIRER's Ubac would go as far as to say, "What's apparent is that we trust him as much as he trusts us back." He explained: "We had to get close. To get more, or better, stories, a reporter should be trusted enough by the source. He (Roco) understands this, and gives as much as he can to the reporters covering his campaign regularly. He answers 99 percent of our questions. He is very quotable. He listens to, and acts on, our opinions as much as possible without compromising his policies.

"We, or at least I, am very straightforward with him. Before he left for the United States, for example, I told him that he had to level with me, because I needed to keep my stories in context. He obliged. It was a moment of mutual respect. Is that getting personal?"

This inadvertent relationship was not lost on Elvira "Bright" Liwanag, who has been in Roco's media staff since 1993. She said, "This is the only media batch I've worked with that calls him the way the staff does: RSR."

The arrival

At the Windows of the World restaurant, Ninoy Aquino International Airport, the senatorial candidates gathered before Flight CX 901's touchdown at 10:55 a.m.

Joson was needling the blind Gatmaytan again: *"Pare, nakita mo ba si* (Have you seen) Bong Coo?"

Gat protested: *"Ba't n'yo ba sa 'kin laging hinahanap si* Bong Coo (Why do you always think I know where she is)?"

Sonza joins in the fray: *"Nachismis na kasi kayo* (You two have been gossiped about)."

Gat: *"Tigilan n'yo na kasi ako* (Leave me alone)."

The number of media men that turned out for Roco's homecoming was five times the usual size, and so the Naia media affairs office ran out of access permits.

At the Dignitaries Lounge where the long-awaited press conference would be held, the crowd was an interesting blend of rabid supporters, a sprinkling of obvious nonbelievers, plus the ambivalent.

The W4R's Castillo said she truly believed Roco's return would translate to vote conversions and re-conversions. "Let's put it this way," she said. "Who else is there?"

Yolly Ong of Campaigns & Grey, who did all of Roco's impressive television commercials, was definitely keyed up. It was not just another job for her, she had been quoted as saying; it was an advocacy. "I'm in this one hundred percent," she reiterated. "Anything less than (poll) victory, I shall consider my personal failure."

A television reporter outside of her station's Alyansa regular told the cameraman, "This shouldn't take long."

Fr. Robert Reyes, the "Running Priest"—who, only days before, was reported as saying Roco's departure for the US had helped make up his mind (between Roco and Eddie Villanueva)—also turned up, with printed statements to give away.

The statement's gist, contained in four lines out of 42, stopped short of an endorsement: "There are two candidates who do not move within the ambit of power, wealth and prestige. Raul Roco and Bro. Eddie Villanueva may be on the fringes of winnability and popularity but they both speak to the mind and heart. They inspire and awaken conscience."

Looking tired and wan but definitely motivated, Roco gave a formal press conference that, as expected, got mixed reviews. The message of the motorcade that followed, however, was unassailable. Counted were some 1,000 vehicles with festive yellow bunting or red and white balloons, and at the head of pack was a rolling billboard that announced: "I have come back to help our sick country recover."

There were the requisite SUVs with sunroofs for the candidates, private cars, passenger jeepneys from nearby provinces, and a handful of taxicabs, one of which visibly delighted Roco's staff.

Excitedly pointing to a cab, Patrick Salamat, one of the founders of the Aksyon Kabataan (youth arm of Roco's Aksyon Demokratiko party) and the former education chief's executive assistant, volunteered: "That's Emil Advincula, the honest cabbie. He's always around."

Six years ago, Advincula landed in the news for returning P1 million that a passenger had left in his cab. Roco publicly commended him as a model Filipino, especially since he had not sought to be rewarded, or even thanked, for the gesture.

And the yellow shirt-clad groups over on one side of Airport Road, Salamat added, were *balikbayans* from Edmonton (Canada) and Vallejo in California, who had come home to campaign for Roco.

The motorcade route brought Roco and his slate from the Naia to his home in La Vista, Quezon City, via the busiest roads—Roxas Boulevard, Buendia Avenue, Ayala Avenue and Edsa.

Yellow ribbons on the trees? There was hardly any, but this didn't bother Arsenia "Zeny" Aloma Estayo, who joined Roco's media staff in 1994. It became clear soon enough why her composure never flagged: it rained yellow and white confetti when the convoy reached Ayala at about 1 p.m., a perfect time to catch the business center's denizens just coming back from lunch. When executives and employees came down from several buildings to cheer the party, Roco and the whole slate had to alight from their SUVs for some serious handshaking.

From a blue van with heavily tinted windows, non-stop commentary spewed forth. *"Bakit ipagkakatiwala ang bayan sa iba? Naririto ang nais maglingkod nang tapat at buong kakayanan* (Why entrust the country to others? This one is prepared to serve with his whole devotion and capability)—Raul Roco!" Obliging impressed spectators, the commentator threw the van's door open at one point and introduced himself: "Resty Opena po, from Bulacan)."

Police had broken up the convoy into manageable parts to avoid totally incapacitating Ayala Avenue. Waiting for the vehicles in the tail end to catch up with those up front at the corner of Makati Avenue, Estayo and Salamat agreed, laughing, that Roco had to get off his vehicle so people could see him up close and touch him, "and be sure it's not Willie Nep."

Roco's "rock star" gait had piped down to an unhurried stride. But the eyes were still engaging, the grip still firm, and the heart, anyone could tell, still on fire. Climbing back on to their assigned SUVs minutes later, Roco and Aquino, and the Alyansa's slate of seven for the Senate were truly back in fighting form at last, as sure as the Christian faith's strongest pillar is the Resurrection.

Honasan backs GMA platform

From page A1

the opposition coalition remained intact.

"*Hindi totoo 'yun. Kahapon* (Sunday) *pa lumalabas yan mga* text messages *'yan ... Kalokohan lang 'yun* (That's not true. Those text messages [about his defection] came out ... That's nonsense)," Poe said.

Poe said the KNP remained intact despite reports quoting De Venecia as saying the Lakas-CMD would form a government of national unity that would include the actor's ally, Sen. Edgardo Angara, should Ms Macapagal win the presidential election.

"*Walang lilipat. Di mangyayari 'yun* (No one will transfer. That will not happen)," Poe said in Alaminos, Pangasinan.

His personal campaign manager, Sen. Vicente Sotto III, said the KNP knew two weeks ago about the covenant of unity against poll cheating signed by Honasan's Guardians and other groups.

Sotto said the signing was a good development. "*Tali ang kamay nila sa* (Their hands are tied when it comes to) election fraud," he told reporters.

The covenant that Honasan signed with De Venecia was for PEACE (peaceful, enlightened, accurate, clean and credible elections).

"This event is precisely designed to lay to rest the dominant feeling now which is fear and mutual suspicion that might lead to projections that there will be post-election violence," he said at the press conference after the signing of the covenant. "We will all be losers if that happens."

Still KNP security chief

Honasan said that he continued to serve as the overall security chief of the KNP and head of its Bantay Balota, an anti-poll fraud program. "I don't intend to give up this responsibility," he said.

He said it was his "moral obligation to support all programs for peace and reconciliation" as chair of the Senate committee on peace, unification and reconciliation.

The covenant said: "Lakas-CMD and PGBI shall bind themselves to actively promote efforts to enhance programs and policies for national unity, peace, reconciliation and development to achieve long-term political stability and economic growth for the Filipino people and upliftment of the less-fortunate."

Gain for the President

Rufino said Honasan's commitment to support Ms Macapagal's programs was a significant gain for the President because "it leads to more peace and stability."

"We're happy that we have responsible officials who want to promote peace and stability," he said.

De Venecia said the covenant would ensure a peaceful post-election period amid charges from the opposition that the administration was bent on cheating. "The mere fact that we're here has dispelled a lot of tension about the elections," he said.

De Venecia has natural links with Honasan, having negotiated during the early 1990s with him and other military rebel leaders of the then Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) who were responsible for the series of bloody coup attempts against the Aquino administration.

The De Venecia initiative led to the 1992 ceasefire with the RAM, the release from prison of right-wing rebels under a general amnesty program, and a final peace agreement.

De Venecia said the Lakas-CMD was supporting the "determined efforts" of the RAM and Guardians to modernize the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The covenant also seeks to discourage the PGBI from taking part in coup attempts against the Macapagal administration.

The group agreed to "inculcate in our soldiers unfailing loyalty to the Constitution and the flag."

No concessions

Asked what it took to have Honasan sign the covenant, De Venecia said: "No concessions were asked, so no concessions were given."

Honasan is facing coup charges before the Department of Justice for his alleged leading role in the Oakwood mutiny in the Makati financial district last year.

Daniel Gutierrez, Honasan's counsel, said the former military rebel leader did not ask for the dropping of the coup d'etat charges against him when he decided to link up with the administration.

"Let them pursue the charges. We can ably defend ourselves legally," Gutierrez said.

The head of the DOJ panel of prosecutors investigating the coup charges against Honasan said they would defer action on the case after the Supreme Court yesterday ordered them to comment on Honasan's petition for the tribunal to cite them for contempt.

"That's the most prudent action we could take pending our comment," said Senior State Prosecutor Leo Dacera .

The DOJ panel earlier gave Honasan until yesterday to submit his counter-affidavit and evidence against the coup charges that the police filed against him.

If Honasan failed to submit his affidavit, the case was supposed to be set for resolution, raising the possibility that he could be arrested once the case is filed in court.

But Dacera said yesterday the panel would wait until the Supreme Court had ruled with finality on Honasan's petition to transfer the investigation of the case to the Office of the Ombudsman.

On April 13, the tribunal ruled that the DOJ had jurisdiction over the case, but Gutierrez said he would file a motion for reconsideration before the ruling became final and executory on Friday. *With a report from Philip C. Tubeza*

Lunar eclipse visible in RP tomorrow

From page A1

ing to the weather bureau.

A lunar eclipse takes place when the Earth comes between the sun and the moon, so that the Earth casts its shadow on the moon.

Tomorrow, the full moon will turn either orange or bright red for up to an hour and 16 minutes, when it will be totally covered by the Earth's shadow from 3:52 a.m. to 5:08 a.m.

The spectacle is the only one of the four eclipses occurring this year—two lunar and two solar—that could be seen from the country, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

The eclipse actually starts at 1:50 a.m. with the moon entering the Earth's penumbra or lighter shadow. At this point, though, changes in the moon's brightness would hardly be discernible to the naked eye.

The phenomenon only becomes noticeable when the moon starts to breach the darker shade or umbra at 2:48 a.m.

Ideal conditions

The "totality" of the eclipse begins at 3:52 a.m. when the entire face of the moon has crossed into the umbra, and ends at 5:08 when the moon slowly emerges from it back into the penumbra, regaining its normal glow.

"With clear skies this summer, we have the ideal conditions for watching it," said Elmor Escosio, chief of Pagasa's Planetarium.

Night owls might as well join astronomy buffs and stay up for this predawn show because, according to Escosio, similar heavenly displays this year—a solar eclipse on Oct. 14 and another lunar eclipse on Oct. 28—will no longer be visible in the country.

A solar eclipse that occurred on April 19 was also not visible in the Philippines, Escosio said.

The lunar eclipse tomorrow will also be seen in Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, South America, Europe and Africa, and the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING OUR NATIONAL LEADERS

1. SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Is this person's love of country and love of the Filipino people going to come before personal interest? Will this person be willing to protect the interests of the Filipino people at the cost of his/her personal benefit or reputation? Trust requires that we can depend on this person not to act opportunistically (hindi mapaglamang). All of these, of course, can be analyzed and seen in the present and past actions of the person rather than in the promises that are being made.

2. MORAL UPRIGHTNESS

Is this person's life a virtuous example to others? Does this person enjoy a good reputation and the esteem of others? Is this person trustworthy? Can we rely on this person to give us the whole truth? Has this person been honest in all instances?

3. COMPETENCE / GOOD JUDGEMENT

People are unlikely to listen to or follow someone whose abilities are wanting or undependable. We need to believe that the person has the skills needed to perform tasks as he/she promises. Competence is not measured by mere educational attainment or intelligence. Rather, we ask: Is the person able to recognize problems, look at alternative solutions, weigh the choices then choose what is best for the country? Does the person use both his/her head and his/her heart in making decisions? Is the person able to choose the right people to be part of his/her team and can the person work with this team as well as with the other branches of government? Is the person able to continuously learn? Does the person have the ability to follow through and get things done?

4. ENERGY

Does the person have the energy and stamina to perform the many functions of the position sought or is the person sickly and lethargic? In the past, has the person been able to keep long hours or does he/she have to take frequent rest periods away from work? What kind of work habits has the person exhibited in previous responsibility positions?

We believe the time for change and renewal is at hand.

We believe our Lord God is calling on His people to transform their lives and make an impact in the life and future of our country.

The forthcoming elections provide us that opportunity to choose those who will lead us to a balanced state of prosperity and other-centeredness.
A nation that is pleasing to God.

We, the Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen and Professionals, an evangelistic Catholic community, with 104 chapters and outreaches nationwide, share with you what we have prayed for and discerned to be the criteria for choosing our national and local leaders. Pray with us for the Lord's Spirit to guide us in making the principled choice. Let us all pray for courage and, with steadfastness, defend the sanctity of our ballots. God bless and protect our beloved Philippines!

Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen & Professionals

WHAT WE STAND FOR

VISION
Life in Christ in all its fullness for businessmen and professionals (John 10:10)

MISSION
To provide a way of life and support environment where businessmen and professionals guided by the Holy Spirit, can experience Christ through a continuing process of
***Conversion** to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ,*
***Commitment** to the values espoused by Him, and*
***Commissioning** as disciples to spread the Good News in the marketplace.*

CORE VALUES
Love for God
Love for Community
Commitment to the Lord's Work

9 US troops killed in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Nine US soldiers were killed in Iraq Sunday but an American truck driver who escaped after three weeks as a hostage brought some relief to US occupation forces battling a scandal over the abuse of prisoners.

Six of the new dead were killed in a mortar attack on a military base, which also left 30 wounded. A mortar landed just inside a US base near Ramadi, 100 km west of Baghdad into a group of soldiers, an officer said.

Another US soldier died in a bomb and small arms attack on a coalition military base near the northern city of Kirkuk, according to the military.

Two US soldiers died in a predawn attack in northwestern Baghdad, a military spokesperson said, in which a US soldier and two members of the paramilitary Iraqi Civil Defense Corps were wounded.

More than 750 US troops have now been killed in Iraq since the US-led invasion in March last year. More than 10,000 Iraqis are estimated to have died.

US President George W. Bush warned Saturday that more violence could be expected before the June 30 transfer of limited authority to an interim Iraqi government.

Civilian truck driver Thomas Hamill, 43, who was abducted April 9, brought a note of cheer amid a wave of grim news for US forces. Hammill slipped away from his captors and met a US patrol some 65 km outside Baghdad.

Hamill telephoned his family in the United States from a US military base.

"He sounded wonderful," his wife, Kellie Hamill, told US television. "He was more worried about us than he was about himself.

"From what I know... he was locked up in a room somewhere. He got out and there was a military convoy coming by," she told NBC television.

"He heard them, he pried the door open, ran down the road... and caught the convoy." Hamill took the patrol back to the house where he had been held and troops detained two Iraqis and a gun during a search.

The release of the father of two children provided some welcome news for the coalition, as allegations that abuse of Iraqis at US-run jails reached up the military hierarchy.

The chair of the US joint chiefs of staff, Gen. Richard Myers, said three investigations were underway into prison abuse. But despite the outcry over pictures of detainees taken at the Abu Gharib prison, outside Baghdad, Myers insisted mistreatment was not systemic.

The New Yorker magazine published details of a leaked copy of a 53-page report into the US military prison system in Iraq, by Maj. Gen. Antonio Taguba. It said there were "sadistic, blatant and wanton criminal abuses" at Abu Gharib.

Human rights groups demanded an independent inquiry after allegations that US military intelligence ordered the abuse to extract information from Iraqis detained since the invasion.

Brig. Gen. Janis Karpinski, who has been suspended as head of the US-run prisons in Iraq, said in an article for The New York Times the prison cellblock in question was controlled by military intelligence, which may have encouraged the abuse.

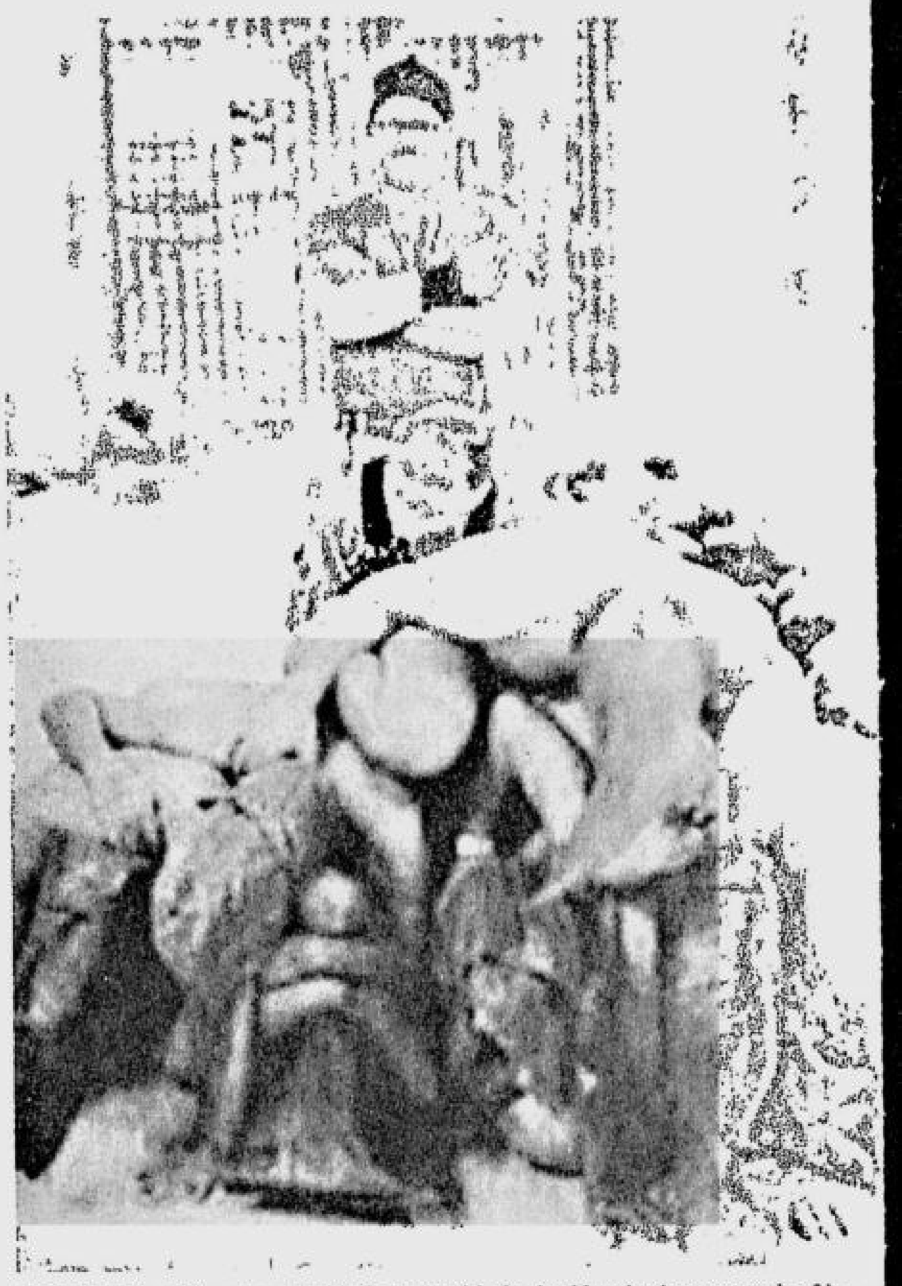
The images show prisoners, some naked, in humiliating, sexually suggestive poses. Some showed US military personnel pointing and laughing at naked prisoners with bags over their heads.

The British tabloid, the Daily Mirror, also published a front-page picture apparently showing British troops urinating over a hooded Iraqi prisoner in a camp near Basra in southern Iraq.

The newspaper quoted a soldier as saying prisoners were beaten with rifle butts.

However, some British defense officials have expressed doubts about the picture. Some of the weapons and clothing seen in the photos had not been issued for the Iraq campaign, officials quoted by the BBC said.

Sunni Muslim leaders in Iraq called the abuses war crimes and called for an independent investigation. *AFP*



AMERICAN soldiers stand behind a pyramid of naked Iraqi prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad, Iraq, in this undated photo.

Photos showing abuse of Iraqi prisoners genuine, says London paper

LONDON—The London newspaper which published pictures apparently showing British troops abusing an Iraqi detainee on Monday denied suggestions that they are fakes.

Doubts arose Sunday over the authenticity of the shocking photos, after military sources quoted by the BBC said many aspects of the pictures were suspicious.

The British military has launched an investigation into photographs published Saturday in Britain's mass-circulation Daily Mirror newspaper appearing to show troops beating and urinating on a hooded Iraqi prisoner in a camp near Basra in British-controlled southern Iraq.

The Daily Mirror, an opponent of the Iraq war, said that the prisoner, aged 18-20, was savagely beaten before being thrown from a moving truck.

However, Britain's national broadcaster said unnamed sources close to the Queen's Lancashire Regiment, from whose soldiers the Daily Mirror said it had obtained the photos, believed several aspects of the pictures are suspicious.

The rifle appears to be an SA80 mk 1, which was not issued to soldiers in Iraq. Troops wear berets or hard hats, not the floppy hats as seen in the pictures. The truck in the photo also appears to be a type never used in Iraq.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair on Saturday condemned the photos—if genuine—as "completely and utterly unacceptable."

Daily Mirror editor Piers Morgan said Sunday he stood by the story and hinted at more revelations after "sensational interviews" with the soldiers who provided them.

"We told the truth" the paper's Monday edition quoted the two British soldiers in question as saying.

"We stand by every single word of our story," they told the paper under cover of anonymity.

"This happened, it is not a hoax and the Army knows a lot more has happened," the pair were quoted as saying.

The anonymous sources added that the British army knew there were other pictures of similar incidents of prisoner abuse in Iraq.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw appeared to leave the door open to possible compensation for any victims, though he stressed it was too early to prejudge the outcome of an inquiry underway.

"Of course it follows that we will accept whatever obligations there are upon us," he told BBC television.

"These allegations are taken extremely seriously and they will be investigated thoroughly."

The publication of the photographs in Britain came after p
tures broadcast throughout the wo
appearing to show US soldiers ab
ing Iraqi prisoners drew condem
tion from international leaders.

Meanwhile fresh claims emerge
of mistreatment of Iraqi detaine
by British troops.

The television program GMTV
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army saying that abuse of Iraqi pr
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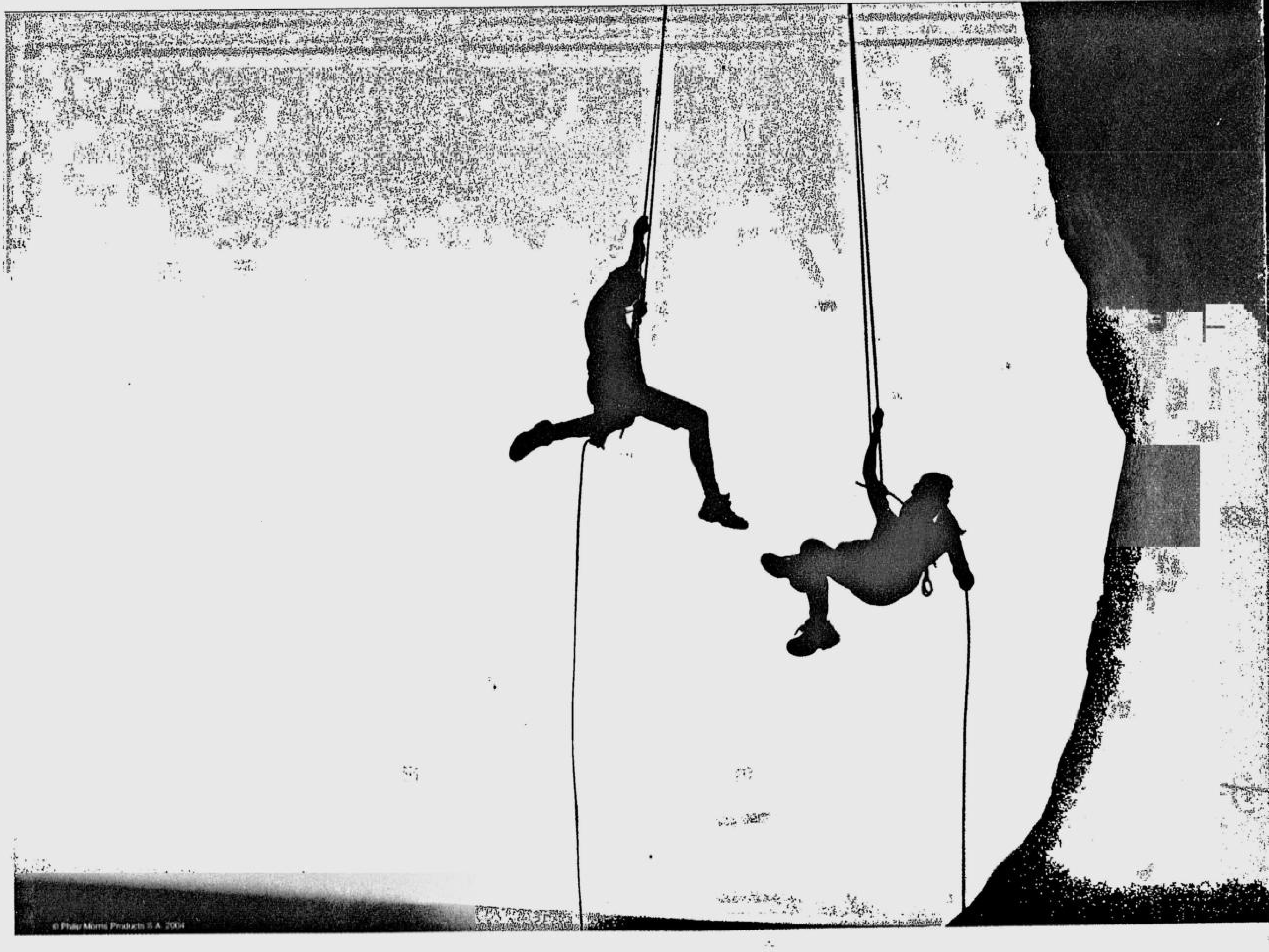

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Westerner's body dragged behind Saudi gunmen's getaway car

YANBU, Saudi Arabia—The body of one of five Westerners killed in a shooting rampage in the Saudi port of Yanbu was stripped naked and dragged behind the gunmen's getaway car, witnesses and press reports said Sunday.

Saudi Arabia's de facto leader vowed to use an iron fist to crush Islamic extremists after Saturday's attack on a petrochemical plant in the Red Sea port which killed two Americans, two Britons, an Australian and a Saudi national.

Four of the attackers and one security agent were also killed in a shootout. One of the assailants was reported to be Abdullah Saud Abu Nayan As-Subayi who is on a list of the kingdom's 26 most wanted terror suspects.

Swiss-Swedish engineering company ABB, who employed the slain Westerners, said it is evacuating all international staff and their families from Yanbu.

"I saw three armed men pull (a victim) close to my school and shout 'Help your brothers in Fallujah (Iraq). Jihad! Jihad! God is great!" said a local student. Another witness added: "The American was mutilated."

The English-language Saudi Gazette reported on its website on Sunday that "a Westerner was kidnapped, stripped naked, tied to a vehicle, and dragged along the road as the attackers made their getaway."

It also ran a photograph of a mutilated body lying in a street before a crowd of onlookers.

"Black Saturday in Yanbu" was the headline on the website of another English-language newspaper the Arab News, quoting witnesses as saying the body was dragged for three kilometers. One Filipino witness said a teenage Saudi was standing on the passenger seat, firing into the air.

However, the official Saudi news agency SPA denied the reports.

Reports that "the bodies of two victims of the ugly attack in Yanbu, including one American, were mutilated and dragged through the streets... are totally unfounded," said an authorized source quoted by the agency.

An officer with the Saudi National Guard was also killed and dozens more people wounded in the attack, which came less than two weeks after a car bombing which killed five people and wounded 145 in Riyadh on April 21.

Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, the kingdom's de facto ruler, vowed that the Saudi authorities would crush terrorists, who he said were manipulated by "Zionism." *AFP*

SHARON

Sharon's party rejects his Gaza withdrawal plan

JERUSALEM—In a heavy blow to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, a large majority of the rank-and-file members of his ruling Likud party voted to reject his plan to withdraw unilaterally from the occupied Gaza Strip.

In results announced on Israeli radio on Monday, a total of 59.5 percent of the 96,700 Likud members who cast votes rejected the scheme, as against just 39.7 percent who approved it.

Voting was influenced by a Palestinian attack that killed a pregnant Jewish woman and her four small daughters as they set out from a Gaza Strip settlement to take part in the vote on Sunday morning.

The heavy "no" vote provides Sharon with a major political headache despite an earlier statement that he would press on with the plan regardless of the vote result.

In a statement issued by his office, Sharon promised to "respect" the outcome of the vote, but did not elaborate on what that would mean in practice.

The United States, Sharon's major ally, voiced the hope that the premier would go ahead with his plan to unilaterally withdraw troops and settlers from Gaza, despite the vote in his party.

"Our own view has not changed: The president (George W. Bush) welcomed Prime Minister Sharon's plan to withdraw settlements from Gaza and a part of the West Bank as a courageous and important step toward peace," the White House said in a statement.

About 40 percent of the Likud's 193,000 members turned out for the crucial vote.

The rejection by his own party of the plan he spent most of the past several months promoting is one of the most serious setbacks Sharon has suffered since taking office as prime minister in March 2001.

The centerpiece of his US-backed "disengagement" plan is a withdrawal of most troops and the removal of all existing 21 Jewish settlements from the Gaza Strip.

Currently some 8,000 Jewish settlers live in the Gaza Strip, alongside 1.5 million Palestinians.

"I will consult the ministers, the Likud and the coalition parties in the coming days to hold in-depth discussions on the consequences of this vote," he added.

Justice Minister Tommy Lapid, of the secular party Shinui party, deplored the referendum result.

"This is the victory of a small group of extremists," he said. "I was dreaming of a coalition with Labour, Likud and Shinui. Now this dream could be history." *AFP*

Millions of computers worldwide hit by worm

PARIS—Millions of computers have already been infected by a new Internet computer worm that caused disruptions over the weekend and may spread rapidly when businesses resume work Monday morning, experts warned.

The worm, named Sasser, began to spread on Saturday, and unlike a virus does not travel through e-mails or attachments. It can spread by itself to any unprotected computer linked to the Internet.

It attacks through a flaw in recent versions of Microsoft's Windows—Windows 2000, Windows Server 2003 and Windows XP—and causes the computer to shut down, then rebooting it, repeating the process several times. But it appears to do no lasting damage.

The antivirus company Panda Software said Sunday slightly more than three percent of the world's computers, around 18 million out of the estimated 600 million operating worldwide, were infected.

"Compared to other viruses which have appeared on weekends when activity is low—doubly so now that May 1 is a holiday in many countries—this one has positioned itself as one of the quickest-spreading and most virulent ones," Luis Corrons of PandaLabs, which has offices in Spain and the United States, said Sunday.

"All these signs make for a dark forecast for the beginning of the week when it is expected that the number of incidents will soar at the beginning of the work day."

"The problem seems to be getting worse," Mikko Hyppoenen, an antivirus expert at F-Secure, a leading internet security firm, said from Helsinki, adding that millions of computers worldwide may have been infected. *AFP*

BUDDHA BIRTHDAY RITE
South Korean novice Buddhist monks hold umbrellas after a ceremony to enter the temple to live as novice monks for a period of 30 days at Chogye temple in Seoul May 3. A group of 11 boys, between 5 to 7 years old, held the ceremony to celebrate Buddha's birthday which is celebrated on May 26. REUTERS

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Picking senators

EDITORIAL

BECAUSE the nation has been preoccupied with the presidential race, not enough attention has been given to the senatorial derby. And yet the election of senators is also an important event. Firstly, because the 12 senators to be elected will compose one-half of the legislature's senior chamber. Secondly, because the Senate is the training ground for presidents, and the next chief executive may come from the 12 senators to be elected on May 10.

How shall we choose the 12 new senators? First, it is important to remember that the world parliament comes from the French word *parler*, which means "to speak." Our Congress may not be called a parliament, but like the other parliaments and legislatures of the world, it is an assembly whose members do a lot of talking. They speak to make their ideas known. They speak to give their stand on current issues and on measures pending before the body.

It is thus important that the senators we shall elect on May 10 should know how to speak. It is not important if they speak in English or Filipino; what is important is that they know how to convey their thoughts to their colleagues and to the people through the medium of speech. There have been—there are—senators who rarely speak on the floor or in committee hearings. They are members of what the senators of the time of Claro M. Recto would call the "*comite de silencio*," the committee of silence. We would be wasting taxpayers' money on these non-performing assets.

KNP presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. denigrates the age-old and worldwide practice of debate. He says it is a waste of time. But it is in debates that the good and bad points of a measure are exposed. It is in debates and discussions that a bill is thoroughly examined and amended, rewritten and refined. So, for a senator to be able to participate in legislation, it is necessary that he be able to speak, and speak sensibly.

The senators we elect should have some education and training or experience in some field of endeavor—the law, education, business, science, etc. Without some expertise, the prospective senator would be floundering about, not knowing what subject to legislate on. He or she would be reduced to just answering the roll call and twiddling his or her thumbs, waiting for the motion to adjourn to be made.

The same yardstick used in choosing the president should apply to the selection of the 12 new senators. After all, one or two of them could be the next president and vice president of the Philippine Republic six years from now. It's important that our senators have integrity and are morally upright. If we require good moral character from the ordinary job applicant for a clerical or blue-collar job, we should require no less from one who aspires to be a senator of the Republic.

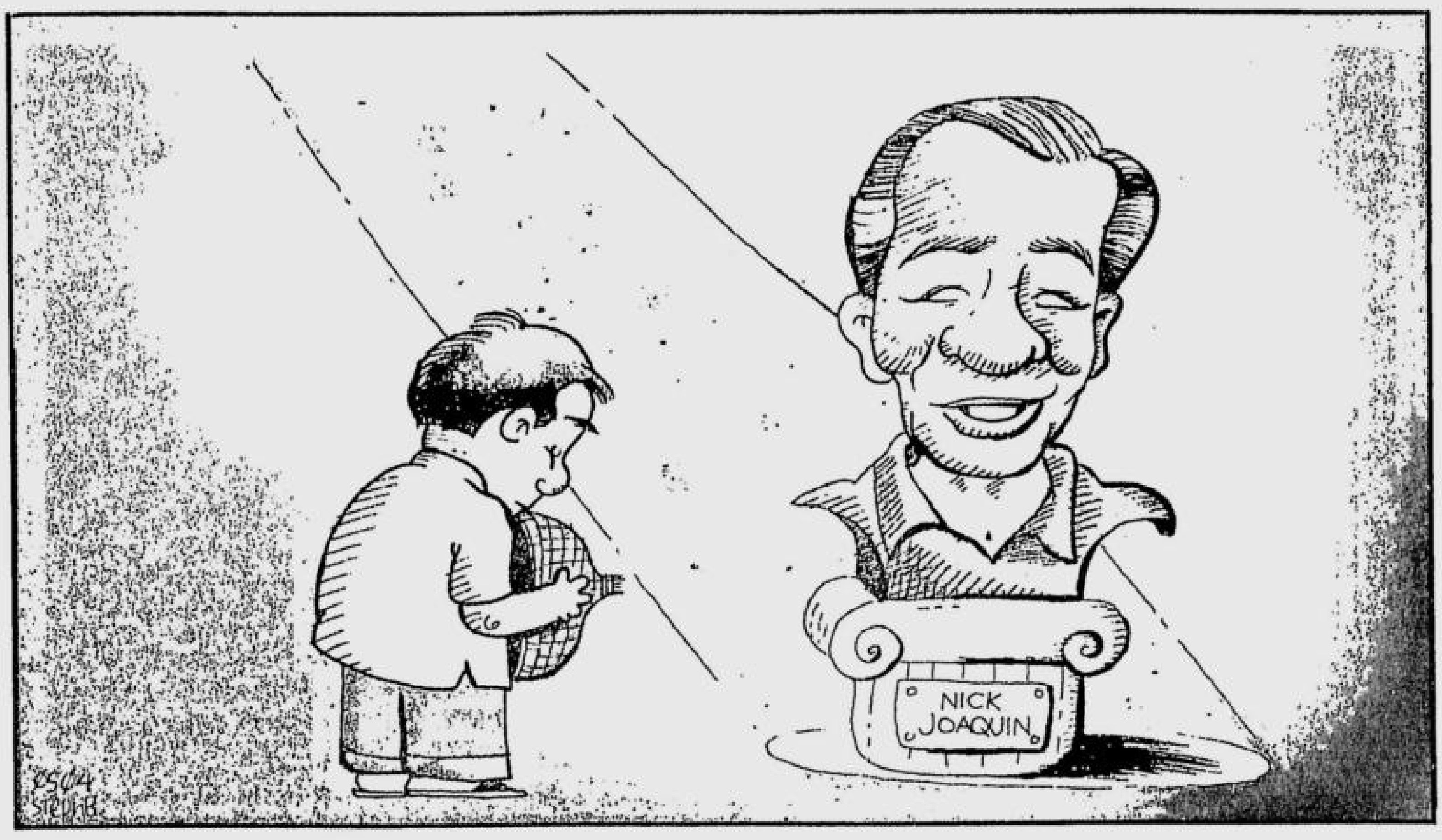
We should require competence from our new senators. They should have done well in their previous positions, whether in the government or the private sector. In choosing the 12 new senators, we should not be blinded by the glamour of show business. Remember that we are electing lawmakers—people who will make laws that will benefit the nation, not entertainers who will keep the nation amused in the next three or six years. But of course we do not say that show-biz people should be barred from the Senate; we say that the actors that we elect should have the potential to make good laws while serving their term in the chamber.

We will have to judge the candidates who are running for reelection, and those who seek to return to the Senate after serving a stint in the Executive Department, by their records in the chamber. How did they vote on crucial pieces of legislation, what was their stand on major issues affecting the nation? What is their stand now on the major issues on the national agenda? The INQUIRER has been running tabulations showing the stand of the senatorial candidates on various issues. These could help voters in deciding which candidates to vote for.

Some voters may forget that there are other senatorial candidates aside from those in the tickets of the two major parties, the K4 and the KNP, who may be worthy of their consideration. There are some independent senatorial candidates who may be better in terms of integrity, competence and experience than most of those on the tickets of the two major parties. Voters would do well to examine the records of all candidates before they make their final choices.

One more piece of advice: Make a "*codigo*," a list of the 12 candidates you intend to vote for. You cannot rely on your memory, because if you do, you may have to resort to name recall, and some candidates with strong name recall may not necessarily be the best ones.

Make your choices well, and let's all hope that everything will turn out best for the nation.



'Pinoy menu' sedative

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

NEED a tranquilizer for election campaign fatigue? Consider the Filipino love affair with food, suggests a friend.

How? Look at those witty signboards on restaurants, urged John Taylor who e-mailed a clutch of them. He added an Ilocano proverb : "Food can heal better than a doctor's knife."

Read "Matter of Taste" on Filipino food by Matthew Sutherland, a British journalist based here since the mid-1990s, another friend wrote. He sent a copy, which is also on the Internet.

"Pansit Ng Taga-Malaboni" proclaims one signboard. It serves pancit malabon, and, where else, but on Boni Avenue. "Fried of Marikina" dishes up fried chicken—in Marikina, of course.

Smack in the middle of Cainta, you'll find "Caintaky Fried Chicken." And burgers of varying size, without the golden arch, are the mainstay of "Mang Donald's" in Naga City.

But those neon come-ons break out of geographical borders. "Miki Mao" specializes in noodles made from *miki*. At "Goto Heaven," tripe is served in steaming congee or porridge that locals know as "*goto*."

"Pusit To The Limit" offers squid, which the writer Noel Coward once described as having "the taste of hot India rubber." "Isda Best" and "Hipon Coming Back" are seafood restaurants.

When customers bite into "Cleopata's" deep-fried pig knuckles, they shuck off those cholesterol anxiety. Crispy *pata* is served here with green mangoes and *bagoong* or, if you prefer, *achara*.

You can always pick up choice T-bone steaks at "Meating Place." Prices here are competitive with those offered at "Meatropolis."

But if you want *kalderetang kambing*, it's available at the stew-and-beer garden known as "Let's Goat Together."

Watch that *kalderetang kambing*, writes Matthew Sutherland. That stewed goat could well be *kalderetang aso* (dog stew). Skip pig's blood soup (*dinuguan*), bull's testicle soup, and *bagoong*, the stinky shrimp paste, and *patis*.

Filipinos are so addicted to the latter items, they'll risk deportation to smuggle them into Australia or the United States, which ban items you can smell from more than 100 paces.

In fact, Filipinos have eight official meals. These are, in order: breakfast, snacks, lunch, *merienda*, *pica-pica*, *pulutan*, dinner, and no-one-saw-me-take-that-cookie-so-it-doesn't-count. Gaps between mealtimes are spent eating Sky Flakes found on every desktop.

You're never far from food. On a drive home, you bump into people frying fish balls, or selling peanuts while ducking traffic, all within a minute.

A meal is not a meal without rice. It's impossible to drink without eating. San Miguel isn't the same without *gambas* or *tapa*. No one ventures from home without *baon*. Might as well ask a Filipino to leave home without his pants on.

If you catch anyone attacking their *baon*, they say: "Sir! *Kain tayo*." This confused me, until I realized they didn't expect me to munch their *bangus*. The polite response is: "No thanks, I just ate."

The principle is: however hungry you are, share with those who may be hungrier. That's great.

Filipinos go further. "*Kumain ka na?*" is a greeting, regardless of time or location.

That observation is seen in 24-hour restaurants. "Doris Day and Night" is owned by Doris and never closes. And for someone out for a second serving, there's "Babalik Karinderia."

Chinatown signboards flag their sweet cakes. Mr. Ho runs "Holand Hopia." Next door is "Poland Hopia," owned by Mr. Po.

"Wrap and Roll" offers *lumpia*. And "Bread Pitt" is a bakery. "Candies Be Love" has a range of sweets.

Pinoy drollness extends beyond food stalls. "Cinna Von" is a laundromat offering *sabon* (soap) service. "Maid To Order" is a domestic helper's placement agency. "Petal Attraction" is listed, in the yellow pages, as a flower shop. And "Pier Carding" is a tailor's outfit that abuts the piers.

Filipinos whip up clever names for strange bits of animals—barbecued feet, head, guts, etc.—they eat, Sutherland found.

"Adidas" is chicken's feet. "Kurbata" or necktie refers to either "neck and thigh" or just chicken's neck. "Walkman" is pig's ears. "PAL" is not Philippine Air Lines' abbreviation; in *carinderias*, that's chicken wings. "Helmet" is for chicken head and "IUD" for the fowl's intestines. And those video-cassette-like blocks of animal blood are "Betamax."

Some foreigners think Filipino food is dull, Sutherland writes. Actually, lots are very good: spicy dishes like "Bicol express" (named after a train); anything cooked with coconut milk; anything *kinilaw*; and adobo.

For cholesterolic frenzy, it's hard to beat *lechon de leche*. Dig a pit, light a fire, add 50 pounds of fat on a stick, and cook until crisp. Mmm. Feel your arteries constrict with each mouthful.

Sutherland says he shares one key Pinoy trait: a sweet tooth. Perhaps, he's the only foreigner who likes sweet bread, sweet burgers, sweet spaghetti, sweet banana ketchup, etc. "I put jam on my pizza."

There's one step toward his full assimilation, which he has yet to take, he notes. And that's to eat *balut*.

For non-Pinoys out there, *balut* is fertilized duck egg. Like English fish and chips, they're sold, with salt, in a piece of newspaper, after dark, so you can't see how gross it is. It's touted as an aphrodisiac. But I can't imagine anything that'd dispel sexual desire more than crunching on a partially formed baby duck.

"The day you see me eating *balut*," says Sutherland, "ask immigration to issue me a Filipino passport. At that point , there's no turning back."

Loyalist

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SOMEONE told me with a smile recently that I seemed to be a Roco loyalist. I said not at all, I did not seem to be a Roco loyalist, I was a Roco loyalist.

"Loyalist," of course, is a curious word, and carries a lot of pejorative meaning in this country. That is so because it has been applied largely to remnants of deposed presidents. You have Marcos loyalists and you have Erap loyalists, and in both cases "loyalist" takes on the aspect of unthinking, irrational, atavistic loyalty to someone who has been proven to be a bane to the society. You are loyal to the person either because you have personally benefited from him, continue to benefit from him in terms of packets of Lucky Me that you get during rallies, or have nothing between your ears.

To be a Roco loyalist is to be the exact opposite. I am a Roco loyalist because I am a reasonable person who would like to vote on the basis of what I think is good and bad and not on the basis of what I expect others to do. What is unthinking, irrational or atavistic is to vote for the lesser of two evils when the choice is between two evils and a good. What is unthinking, irrational or atavistic is to vote for someone simply because I have been given to believe most others will do so. What is unthinking, irrational or atavistic is to believe that someone has a "sure win," as though that were written in the stars and not contingent on whether I vote for him (or her) or not.

Roco is easily the best presidential candidate today. To this day, I have yet to hear anyone question his capability. People have questioned his EQ (he is reputedly given to displays of temper), people have questioned his campaign resources (he doesn't have strong vested interests to back him up or a public treasury to raid), and now people have questioned his health. But no one has questioned his capability to run the country.

Of course, someone has suggested that he has never offered an alternative to GMA's economic program. That is a monumentally ridiculous idea for three reasons.

First is that in any elections the burden of proof lies not on the challengers but on the incumbent. The issue is always how the incumbent has performed. It is his or her record that people decide for or against. It is merely a trick of the GMA camp to draw attention away from GMA's disastrous record—a record so disastrous it forced her to vow she wouldn't run again in December 2002—by asking what her rivals' alternatives are. It did succeed in laying FPJ low on that basis, making his lack of experience rather than the country's bad experience with GMA the issue. It is a testament to the quality of FPJ's advisers that they fell for the trick.

Second is that when you see someone being murdered, you do not step in to suggest possible alternatives to the murderer, you stop the murderer from committing the crime, or you shout your head off. What this means in less than metaphorical terms is that when someone is strangling the economy, the politics and the moral life of this country, you do not suggest possible alternatives to the strangler, you stop her from committing the crime or you shout your head off. What alternative are they talking about? Any alternative would be better than what we have today.

That is by no means hypothetical, that is historical. GMA became President because we shouted our heads off and stopped Joseph Estrada from murdering this country three and a half years ago. If we had stopped to examine our alternatives-- chief of them being that GMA would take over—we would never have mounted Edsa II. Some iniquities are compelling and urgent enough in themselves to demand to be stopped, whatever the consequences.

And three, you want alternatives, look at the separate records of the candidates. GMA has made a big deal about experience, but the only experience we've had with her was that late last year, we had in rapid succession a military mutiny, the Pidal exposé, the Naia takeover, the attempted expulsion of Hilario Davide as Chief Justice, the series of rallies protesting her rule. By contrast, Roco took over a Department of Education that had become one of this country's most corrupt offices and made it, by the World Bank's reckoning, the best-run department in government.

Words are cheap, anyone can hire a group of people to write an impressive platform, and it would mean nothing. Look at the deeds, that's where the real alternatives lie. Words just lie. You can always promise not to run and run anyway.

Someone has asked as well why Roco persists in running, as though that were an unfathomable mystery. The premise of it, of course, is that he is going to lose anyway, GMA being a sure bet. Well, it is no mystery at all. Roco persists in running simply because he is the best alternative and because there are enough thinking Filipinos, or Filipinos who believe they are human beings and not lemmings, who will vote for the person they think will be good for this country and not the one they know won't be so simply because "there's nothing they can do about it." There is something they can do about it: They can vote for Roco.

The "winnability" of candidates is not written in the stars, it is written in the ballot. The "winnability" of candidates is not a power they hold in their hands, it is a power I hold in my hands. I do not vote for a candidate, he will not win. I vote for a candidate, he will win. It is as simple as that. I've said it before and I say it again: The only thing worse than being powerless is having the power and not knowing you do. Or worse, having the power and relinquishing it to the illusion-sellers.

I am a Roco loyalist. I am loyal to reason, I am loyal to common sense, I am loyal to the country.

Plugging for friends

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

MEDIA reports said that Sen. Gregorio Honasan, national chair and president of the Philippine Guardians Brotherhood, yesterday signed a coalition agreement with the Lakas CMD president, Speaker Jose de Venecia, and Lakas secretary general, Davao Gov. Rodolfo del Rosario, declaring support for President Macapagal-Arroyo's program for good government and for free, honest, transparent, credible and non-violent elections. The reports said that Honasan and De Venecia vowed to work closely together under GMA's genuine program of national reconciliation and unification. Citizens welcome this signing as we're all for free and honest and credible elections as well as good governance.

Yesterday's signing, however, has caused a bit of confusion. If Honasan has agreed to support GMA's program for good governance, to any political pundit this means that Honasan is withdrawing from the FPJ camp where the Bicol senator is in charge of security. If Honasan has agreed to support GMA's program for good governance, this can only be read as a de facto withdrawal of support from the opposition. This is why Honasan's "clarification" that he remains very much in the FPJ camp is quite confusing. Which is which, Senator Honasan?

* * *

This is the season for confusing news and the latest is that the Iglesia ni Cristo now denies that it is backing GMA and six senatorial candidates of the administration. I have little doubt that the "denial" is only the handiwork of the opposition. Recall that the media reported that FPJ and the opposition are trying to reverse the impending anointment, which has been confirmed by no other than former President Estrada. It could be that this "denial" is a way of dissembling the truth or stalling for time. I have no doubt that eventually the influential religious sect will anoint GMA, as I cannot see the INC supporting FPJ especially now that the latter is slipping in the surveys. INC leaders doubtless realize that, as the businessmen keep stressing, the country's condition will worsen with a victory by FPJ, and I cannot see the respected INC leaders willfully contributing to its downfall.

* * *

Unknown to the public, the inner circle now of Fernando Poe Jr. is composed of activists from the University of the Philippines during their younger days. Susan Tagle, the most trusted aide of FPJ who was placed in over-all charge of the KNP's media relations, was active in campus politics in her student days. Jojo Binay and Eduardo Araullo were law partners during the Marcos dictatorship who were almost mowed down by the notorious Metrocom while they were campaigning for the late human rights lawyer Bobbit Sanchez when he ran as assemblyman of Pasig in 1978.

* * *

This column asked Sen. Joker Arroyo, Jojo Binay's mentor during their Flag and Mabini days, why Jojo accepted the task of KNP general campaign manager at a time when political fortunes have changed against their side. Arroyo said Binay's move made sense. "Before Jojo was a platoon leader of the Makati KNP volunteers, then he became a company commander of the MMDA KNP volunteers. Now he is in command of the armies of the KNP and party generals click their heels and salute him." As you can see, said Arroyo with a wry smile, "better the head of a rat than a lion."

Defeat? "It does not bother Jojo," opined Arroyo, judging from the books in his library. He noted that Jojo's favorite generals are Napoleon, "whose height he adores," and the stately Robert E. Lee, both of whom are remembered in defeat as much as Wellington and Grant who defeated them.

Another guy who adores Napoleon's height, according to Arroyo, is Mike Defensor, another protégé whom he jokingly describes as the "spokesbaby" or the "spokesfetus" of the President.

Asked who is the better general in this battle of the midgets, Arroyo opined that "Binay is an excellent field officer, while Defensor is a superb staff officer."

* * *

I have been batting here for friends running for various political posts. I have batted for K-4 senatorial candidates Mar Roxas, Richard "Wow" Gordon, Robert Barbers and Rodolfo Biazon as well as for independent senatorial candidate Heherson Alvarez, who has received valuable support from two of his former "comrades" in the struggle against the dictatorship: former Senate President Jovito Salonga and Sen. Joker Arroyo. I have also plugged for Alyansang Pagasa senatorial bet Francisco Chavez, a prominent human rights advocate who battled the Marcos dictatorship during the First Quarter Storm and later served as Cory Aquino's solicitor general, instituting 39 cases in the Sandiganbayan against 415 Marcos cronies and dummies. Chavez will be an independent voice in the Senate.

I'd also like to plug for reelectionist Gov. Sally Zaldivar-Perez of Antique, president of the Western Visayas league of governors, who has already chalked up quite a proud record of achievement in her first three years. Think of what this indefatigable Antique leader could do if she is returned to the San Jose capitol.

* * *

Bohol reelectionist Gov. Erico Aumentado related to me the other day that his province mirrors the imminent landslide for GMA in the entire Visayas as predicted by Visayan leaders like Franklin Drilon and Raul Gonzalez. Aumentado cited the results of a survey conducted from March 26 to April 15 by the Holy Name University Research Center in Tagbilaran, whose staff was trained by the Social Weather Stations. The survey was taken just after FPJ's visit to Tagbilaran, and before the April 27 visit by GMA, but the President got 53 percent while FPJ got only 14 percent. Raul Roco polled 11 percent and Eddie Villanueva got 3 percent.

Bocelli and reality

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

SUPERLATIVES have already been aired by those who were fortunate enough to listen to tenor Andrea Bocelli at the Araneta Coliseum last Friday.

I agree with all the positive and indeed gushing reviews. It was indeed a rare honor and pleasure to have Bocelli and his collaborators, soprano Maria Luigia Borsi and conductor Maestro Marcello Rota, in our midst sharing their artistry. And as a Filipino, I felt immense pride at the performance of the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra, renamed the "Father Pio Symphony Orchestra" for that night's performance in honor of Baby Arenas, a devotee of the Italian saint and producer of the Bocelli concert. Not only did the orchestra ably accompany the performers, they also shone spectacularly in their own "solo" pieces.

The program proper consisted of arias from well-known operas as well as songs from the classical repertoire. Rifling through the souvenir program during the break, I was disappointed not to find "The Prayer," which Bocelli popularized in his duet with pop star Celine Dion. But die-hard Bocelli fans were rewarded when the tenor responded to the thunderous acclaim by obliging with several encores, including "The Prayer." Indeed, as one critic pointed out, the Bocelli concert and the Filipino audience's warm reception proved that classical music in this country does have an appreciative mass audience. If only it were promoted with the same marketing savvy used to "sell" pop acts.

I certainly hope Arenas and ABS-CBN, which co-sponsored the concert, made a hefty profit for themselves and for the various charity beneficiaries. Not only because they deserve to be rewarded for their faith in the willingness and ability of Filipinos to support world-class artists, but also because this could encourage them to bring in even more artists of the same caliber as Bocelli, who with his voice could transport us and help us forget the tawdry realities of life in this land.

* * *

THERE was certainly need for transporting the audience that night.

Judging from the tales of friends and acquaintances among Bocelli's audience, most everyone had to go through the nightmare of traffic around Araneta Coliseum and the surrounding areas. Many in the audience, including those teetering in long gowns and stiletto heels, fearing that the doors of the Coliseum would be closed to latecomers, had to walk some blocks when traffic stalled around the Araneta Commercial Center.

After the concert, hundreds of ticket holders got embroiled in a melee at the booth where cell phones, confiscated to prevent interference with the complex sound systems, were being handed back to their owners. A full hour after the concert, having successfully retrieved our phones and partaken of dinner at Café Bola, I wandered over to the entrance and was drawn by a noisy mob which was still battling for ownership of their surrendered cell phones.

"My God!" said a distraught guest, "we all came here dressed in formal wear and fully made up and we ended up fighting each other like in a *palengke*!"

If we're going to play host to more world-class artists and acts, we now know where to start. Not with the red carpet and a sound system up to global standards, but with the basics like traffic management and systems planning. At the very least, they could have advised ticket holders not to bring their cell phones with them, or else risk a premature descent to the urban jungle which we had all sought to escape by two hours of Bocelli's transforming artistry.

* * *

RARELY do we find legislators letting their personal concerns and experiences inform their legislative agenda. One such instance, should he be favored with a return to the Senate, is former Sen. Heherson Alvarez who, because of his wife Cecile's struggle against breast cancer, is proposing the creation of a Philippine Cancer Institute "to specifically provide comprehensive health care for poor cancer victims, but operated through a public-private partnership."

Alvarez, who is running as an independent senatorial candidate, says that if elected, he is willing to use his Countrywide Development Fund as seed money for the institute and will encourage his colleagues in the Senate to join the crusade against cancer.

"Cancer is now the nation's second cause of death, trailing heart disease," says the former senator and environment secretary. "Over the next 30 years, cancer will surpass heart disease and become the leading cause of death, but there is still no national cancer plan that will address this growing medical menace."

While cancer survivors and their families and friends would do well to support Alvarez, given his qualifications, thoughtful voters should consider including him in their line-up, too.

* * *

MEANTIME, there is a Cancer Institute at UP-PGH, with my friend Dr. Cecile Llave as director. When I last visited the institute, Dr. Llave toured me around the premises, and showed me examples of how the private sector could team up with a government facility to provide better health services for a dreaded but still mysterious disease.

Already, private groups like Avon have worked with the UP-PGH Cancer Institute to set up services like the Breast Cancer Center. They also recently inaugurated the beautiful "Healing Garden" to speed up the healing of patients.

Perhaps Alvarez could work with the dedicated healers at the institute to formulate more detailed plans for the proposed National Cancer Institute.

I would like to express my condolences to the family of the late Dr. Covadonga Romualdez, mother of former Health Secretary Alberto Romualdez. She passed away last May 1 and now lies in state at St. James Mortuary in Ayala Alabang Village.

Ilocos is in the heart

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

SINCE Ilocos Sur is more accessible because of its proximity to Manila, much has been written about it and many have fallen for her charms. There are enough varied accommodations to suit different pocketbooks and—surprise! surprise!—you could even say there's a night life if you enjoy sitting in outdoor restaurants and singing on the karaoke till the wee hours of the morning. As a rule travel agents complain about the lack of anything for their clients to do at night in provincial towns.

Now Ilocos Norte, being more remote, is another story. The first time I went there more than a decade ago to do some research for a TV show, I was told my host would be a Colonel Abadilla. The name didn't ring any bells until a *compadre* commented when I had returned to Manila, "Your host was who?" Anyway, I never did get to meet the gentleman but was taken aback by the fact that I was always accompanied by two bodyguards. Not being used to such man-to-man guarding, I asked why it was necessary since I wasn't in politics, wasn't Chinese and didn't have enough business to have rivals out to get me. Turned out it wasn't me they were worried about. It was their L-300, which was easily recognizable as belonging to the colonel.

Drawing a blank as to what the colonel could have done to merit such concern, I concluded it was all political, which wasn't far off the mark. You have to admit politics is not exactly good for your health.

In the meantime, his staff kept me entertained with stories about political rivals who locked their wives in dungeons together with secretaries and their husbands. In one case, the husband happened to be a policeman but that didn't help the man at all. Makes you wonder whether anyone missed these people stashed away underground.

But times have changed hopefully. Recently the Gameng Foundation has come out with a guide book simply called "Ilocos Norte" (more about that later), but back then there were no glossy brochures or anyone who had studied the churches of the north enough to write books about them. So if you were taking off for what at that time was practically a foreign country, it was entirely up to you to learn as much about the place as you could before you left.

It wasn't really necessary. It wasn't the splendid churches (although Paoay is breath-taking) or century-old acacias and sheltering fire trees that made it worth the long journey, it was simply that Ilocos Norte must surely have been one of the most beautiful of our provinces especially at a time when the McDonald's and the Chow King's hadn't managed to foul up the landscape. (On the other hand, these fastfood chains do make it easier for a tourist to grab a cheap and familiar meal.) The Ilocos Norte coastline was—and is—breathtaking. You haven't lived if you haven't seen Pagudpud and driven down the Patapat viaduct. Or stood on the steps of the Burgos lighthouse overlooking Cape Bojeador, surveying this wild seascape and imagining those ancient galleons tossing on those furious seas.

The guide book tells us Ilocos entered recorded history when Juan de Salcedo, Adelantado Miguel de Legaspi's nephew, was sent to explore the region. But more than 500 years later the names of towns remain unchanged—Badoc, Batac, Laoag, Dingras, Bacarra—and many have retained the design of their ancestral past as laid down in the Laws of the Indies. There's the central plaza around the church, the *casa tribunal* or municipal hall and the houses of the *principales*.

Ilocos churches are famous as you know for their massive buttresses and for bell towers usually constructed at some distance from the churches as a precaution against devastating earthquakes that must have occurred with great frequency in those days. Huge acacias generally shade these provincial plazas of Ilocos. It is part of its charm that despite or because it was always considered a dry and rocky place, the people planted trees that offer shelter against a relentless sun.

Another well-kept secret are the white-sand beaches along Bangui Bay in Pagudpud. And it is true you can walk on them at noontime and the sand actually feels cool to the touch. We are told you can go kayaking or gaze at Burayoc's limestone formations. Ayoyo has pebble beaches and Pasaleng fine sand beaches that are almost always deserted. Or if you go for spelunking, there are mountains in the town of Pasuquin riddled with caves, complete with spectacular rock formations and underground streams. But buy the book and find out what else there is to make your vacation memorable.

Bacarra, on the other hand, has retained its old town plan and maintained most of its colonial buildings. If colonial architecture is your cup of tea, there are two houses around the plaza and another cluster west of it. The *municipio* is a three-level structure resembling a church with a baroque façade.

But now that the provincial governor (who is running unopposed) himself admits that the secret of Ilocos Norte's charms "is well and truly out," it's a good thing that the Gameng Foundation came out with a guide book that offers concise histories of the 22 towns of the province. Historical personalities are presented and noteworthy structures are discussed. There are even suggested itineraries.

One can only hope that Filipinos will make an effort to enjoy their country before making a beeline to the airport. The first tourists should be us. If you do decide to make Ilocos Norte your next destination, this guide book will prove indispensable.

Never again

YOUNG BLOOD

Raffy Jamolangue

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

CANDIDATES make promises, which quickly turn out to be empty or are broken easily. So why don't we voters make our own promises? No, our promises will not be made for the sake of some candidates, but for our country, our children and for ourselves.

For our country's sake, for our children and for ourselves, let us say:

Never again will I help put in key positions people who are uninformed, unintelligent, sweet talkers but non-achievers, attractive but ineffective.

Never again will I waste my vote on people who have no integrity.

Never again will their money and popularity influence my choice of candidates.

Never again will I vote for a candidate because of the movies he has starred in.

Never again will I vote for a candidate because I see his or her name on billboards announcing government projects. (I am a taxpayer and that's my money they are using to construct those projects!)

Never again will I vote for people who act as if they are above the law.

Never again will I cast my vote without giving my choices much thought; but instead I'll make my choices on the basis of their ideals and vision and their competence.

Never again will I choose a candidate because of what I can get in return.

Never again will I vote for a candidate who will betray me and abuse my country.

It makes me mad to know that many candidates have managed to win high government positions by using their money, charm, popularity and show-biz and family connections. I am furious at people who are so blind and unthinking as to be mesmerized, fooled and misled by these candidates.

Let us be vigilant and take a stand. Let us say, never again!

Raffy Jamolangue, 28, runs a small graphic design company.

Who are they fooling?

Kurt Yu

I ONLY read the book "Animal Farm" by George Orwell recently, and I realized that the things said in the book have been happening to the Filipino people and would probably continue to happen indefinitely. This is a tragic situation for us.

In the novel, the animals start a rebellion over their human masters. They succeed and take over the farm. When the farm is finally theirs, they dream of all sorts of things: freedom to do the things they've always wanted to do, more rest, more food and delicious food, and a lot of privileges that had been denied them when humans were still the rulers. But instead of having paradise now that there were no more human masters, the situation turned for the worse. The pig masters made the animals work so hard with so little food and rest. All the good food went to the pigs while the rest of the animals were exhausted from doing so much work. The other animals were mistreated while the pigs became like their human masters, ruling with an iron fist.

The same thing seems to be happening to us. Periodically our leaders are replaced by new leaders who as candidates made plenty of promises that the majority of Filipinos, like dumb animals, just keep believing. We vote for certain candidates, hoping our lives will be better. Candidates keep promising and promising things that simple Juan dela Cruz keeps hoping will make life better. But when these candidates are finally elected, nothing happens and things get worse for the ordinary Filipino. And when the elected official is asked what difference he has made on the lives of Filipinos, he rattles off a lot of numbers, confusing the ordinary folk and making them believe that life actually became better during this official's term of office.

The same things happen under one administration after another, under one leader after another. This trend in politics was what probably provoked Orwell to write with indignation about the abuses committed by those in power, the abuses done by the intelligent, rich and powerful to those who are dumb, poor and powerless. In his novel, the pigs always managed to convince the dumb animals that life had become better after the animals began to rule themselves. The pigs would quote so many figures to prove to the intellectually challenged animals that indeed life was better that when the humans ruled over them. But of course, except for the pigs, the animals were in a much more miserable state than when humans ruled over them.

Today we are caught in a similar situation because of our politics. Candidates make the most lavish promises to the people and the people believe them in their dumbness. Politicians use all kinds of tools and lies just to be able to grab power and rule over the majority. And when they finally get to exercise power, it is only they who are benefited, just like the pigs in Orwell's novel who got all the good food while the rest of the animals had so little to eat and so much work to do.

It's like promises are made to be broken and candidates will do anything to get into power. And when they get into positions of power, they continue to fool the people and make them believe they are working very hard and doing their best to improve the lives of millions.

If there were someone who knows everything, I believe that he would say that in reality the quality of life of Filipinos has steadily declined in its standard and that the candidates have done the very opposite of what they have promised when they were were still campaigning. Our leaders only serve themselves.

May God have mercy on their souls for fooling the masses.

Kurt Yu, 21, graduated last March from the Ateneo de Manila University with a bachelor's degree in Computer Engineering.

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Waiting for tomorrow

I READ James Michael L. Payumo's essay with great interest. Although a naturalized American, his intense love and passion for his motherland have not diminished one bit, typical of almost all other naturalized Fil-Americans. They view this year's Philippine presidential elections from where they are with as much interest and concern as all other clear thinking Filipinos wherever they may happen to be.

However, Mr. Payumo's assessment of the inherent traits in the Filipino's character is clearly laced with emotional bias. He is proud to see the vitality and resiliency of the Filipino as he faces the rigors of life, but fails to recognize the flaw in such a stoical stand.

The Filipino accepts life's disappointments as fate, out of his control, "*hatol ng tadhana*," which is indeed a serious flaw in the Filipino psyche. Mr. Payumo sees virtue in the Filipinos' ability to "laugh, love and enjoy the pleasures of family and home in the worst of circumstances that could break even the strongest of human spirits."

So wrapped up in his joy to see the land of his birth after being away for three years, Mr. Payumo has completely forgotten what Filipinos do to ameliorate much of his problems. He minimizes and trivializes his problems. He would fiesta, sing and dance. He would look up and pray, "*Ang Diyos na ang bahala.*"

Yes, Mr. Payumo, we can continue to "feel proud of our Filipino countrymen, sorrow for our nation's troubles and joy in the knowledge that there is always tomorrow." The trouble is we have been waiting for that tomorrow when the flawed Filipino culture of "*puwede na, OK lang, bahala na*" changes itself to genuine love for country and responsible governance.

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Double-faced party-list groups

OF COURSE, Secretary Bert Gonzales is harassing Bayan Muna.

It's only fair. National Security Secretary Gonzales' party, the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas, could not get past the 2 percent threshold in the 2001 party-list elections. Bayan Muna did with the help of the government coalition, People Power Coalition. To express its gratitude, Bayan Muna attacked the Macapagal administration on every conceivable issue for the next three years.

It is also Secretary Gonzales' job as national security adviser. The Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army and its political fronts constitute the single biggest threat to Philippine national security. The Armed Forces of the Philippines and the police have stepped up tactical operations against the NPA. Secretary Gonzales needs to step up the fight on the political front.

Secretary Gonzales could have made himself clearer. He has called for the disqualification of the six parties he identified as CPP fronts, not because they espouse communism but because they are linked to an armed group. Armed goons, whether of the Right or the Left, do serious damage to the integrity of the electoral process.

Satur Ocampo and the spokespersons of the six parties do not deny a political connection with the CPP. What they deny is an organizational connection with the NPA; admitting this would automatically disqualify them from participating in elections. But underground groups do not publicly announce their organizational links. Secretary Gonzales will have difficulty getting the Comelec to find sufficient legal grounds to disqualify the six parties.

In the end, the issue is political, not legal. When an Abanse! Pinay organizer in Panay, or an Akbayan municipal councilor in Albay, is told to stop campaigning in NPA-controlled barangays because these barangays are "reserved" for Bayan Muna or Anak Pawis, he or she doesn't stop to ask if this is legal before they get scared. If he or she thinks NPA threats give unfair advantage to Bayan Muna because neither Abanse! Pinay nor Akbayan has an army, should we blame those parties when they find a sympathetic chord in Secretary Gonzales' move?

Open legal progressive parties, such as Akbayan, are more than happy to compete with national democratic parties in elections. But national democratic parties cannot have it both ways: legal and illegal (because armed) at the same time. It is unfair for a legal, open party to compete in democratic elections with the support of an army, the New People's Army.

Threats of violence to intimidate competitors and to raise campaign funds through the Permit-to-Campaign fees distort electoral competition. National democratic parties have to make up their minds. If they want both, they should not complain if people denounce their unfair tactics.

—JOEL ROCAMORA, executive director, Institute for Popular Democracy, 45 Matimtiman St., Teachers Village, Quezon City

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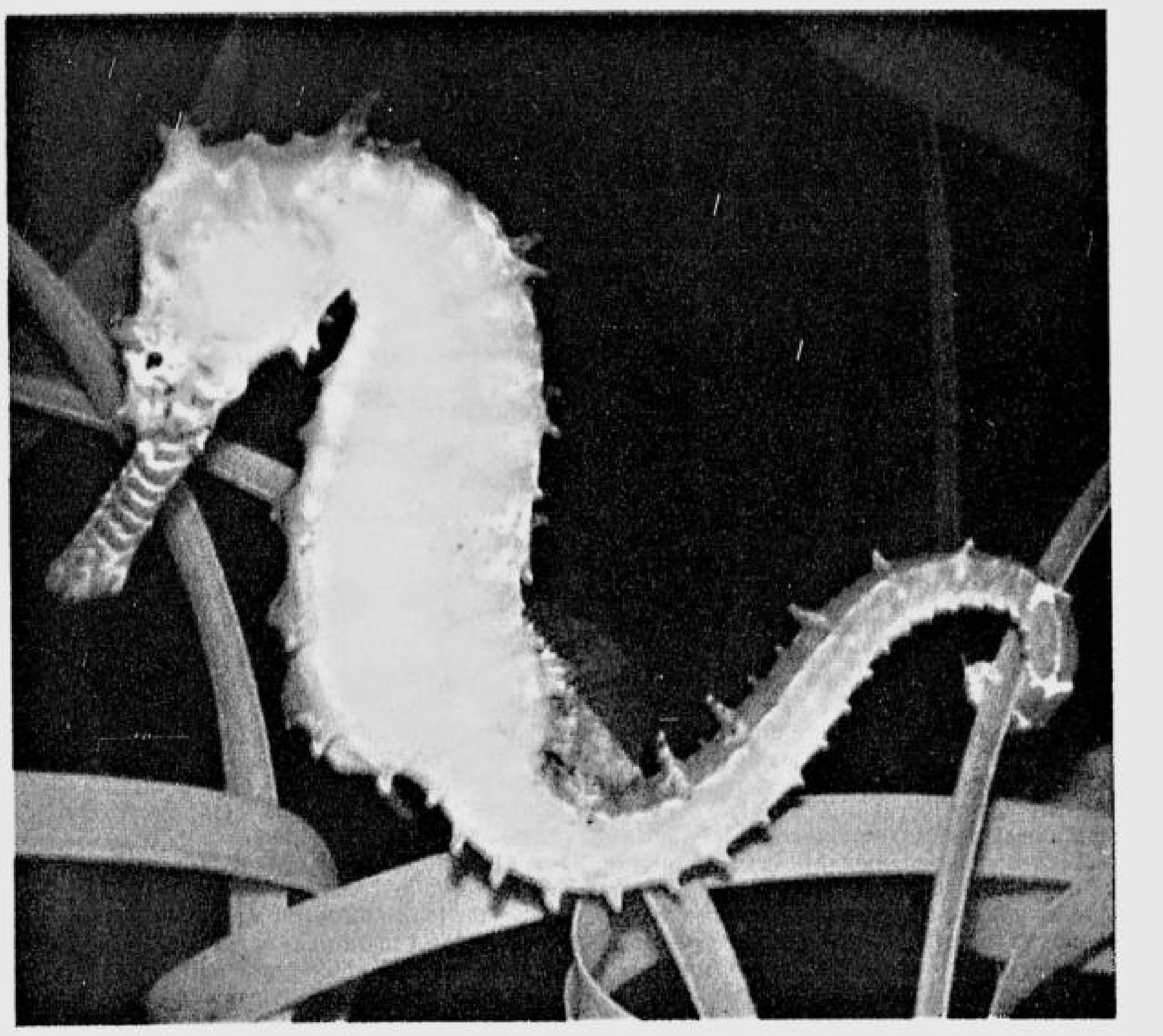

How about the fishers this May?

COME May 15, 2004, the international community will implement the listing of seahorses in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). While this is good news, affirming the international will to manage the trading of this adorable species, it may mean loss of income for some of our impoverished fishers in the country. This is because Section 97 of the Philippine Fisheries Code is quite strict in the interpretation of CITES by prohibiting the collection and fishing of all species in its appendixes.

CITES implements the convention through special lists called appendices according to the level of threat faced by each species: Appendix I lists endangered species; Appendix II lists those that may become endangered if trade is not managed; and Appendix III lists species at the request of countries requiring assistance for their conservation.

Unfortunately, the above-cited Section 97 does not distinguish between the species as appendixed in CITES. The resulting automatic ban thus conflicts with the intention of CITES to manage sustainable trade. It in effect penalizes fishers unfairly, who now must either shift to other fishing resources for livelihood or become criminals.

A ban is also likely to promote illegal trade. The archipelagic nature of our country and a shortage of financial resources would make it both costly and difficult to carry out trade surveillance and enforcement of this ban.

Project Seahorse believes that sustainable use is compatible with conservation. For example, we can encourage fishers illegally collecting giant clams in the wild to become fisher-farmers by promoting other sustainable fishing practices. Likewise, we can help ensure that the collection of seahorses in the wild does not lead to overfishing by establishing a minimum size limit and enforcing it at the exporter level. Under a revised Section 97, national authorities could permit either low or high levels of trade, monitored and managed for sustainability.

A law flexible enough to implement a range of management interventions, one that encourages multi-stakeholder participation and decision-making, would go a long way toward ensuring the survival of many species, while addressing the needs of fishing communities throughout the country.

—ERWIN O. BRUNIO, Policy Research and Advocacy Officer, Project Seahorse Foundation for Marine Conservation, 222 1st Street, Happy Valley Subdivision, Guadalupe, 6000 Cebu City, Philippines

Cruel cartoon

INQUIRER's editorial cartoon of May 3, 2004, depicting a crawling Roco, has set a new standard for gutter commentary. We, the readers, do not expect much by way of wit or depth—but the cruelty and malice of this particular illustration surpass even tabloid sensationalism.

Whoever G. Daroy is, I hope he seriously considers improving his craft so he can use his media influence in a more productive way. He must be able to draw the line between irreverence and downright spite.

To the editors who allowed such muck to masquerade as legitimate satire, I hope this is an oversight that you will correct, rather than an indication of the deterioration of editorial integrity. If you cannot be non-partisan, be at least humane. Unnecessary venom has a way of poisoning you back.

PDI, rightly or wrongly, has often been accused of sensationalizing for the sake of increasing sales.

Our agency was one of the few who defended your paper and bucked the boycott initiated by former President Estrada in 2000.

Please prove to us that it was not a mistake.

—Yoly Villanueva-Ong, group chair, Campaigns Group of Companies

Factors weakening SSS fund life

THIS is in response to the column of Honesto General titled "SSS: Biggest single money loser ever." (PDI, 3/15/04)

May we be allowed to clarify certain issues raised in the article:

1. "The SSS management admitted that P25 billion in overdue low-cost housing loans would have to be written off."

This statement is incorrect. The SSS management never said it will write off the National Home Mortgage Financing Corp.'s (NHMFC) P30.5-billion loan. But the management has agreed to a restructuring, which would allow the SSS to recover its investment.

2. "Incredibly, while members' assets were evaporating, operating expenses were rising."

The SSS management should be given credit for the cost-cutting measures that SSS president Corazon dela Paz has implemented since 2001. The SSS has realized about P300.17 million from these cost-saving measures.

In 2002, the SSS generated total savings of P574.9 million, 87.6 percent of which came from cutbacks in personnel benefits while 12.4 percent resulted from tighter control of other operating expenses.

Despite the cost-savings measures, operating expenses continue to rise due to the increase in the volume of membership and transactions. With 24 million members worldwide, the SSS is continuously enhancing its service and upgrading computer operations to provide quality service to all its members.

3. "The period over which benefits will be paid has now been shortened. The SSS management has openly admitted the money will run out by 2015. PARP's study indicates that the system will dry up by 2011, just seven short years away."

Notwithstanding the standby guarantee of government in case of insolvency as spelled out in its charter, the SSS requires all programs to be financially viable and sustainable over the long-term. However, the life of the fund has been reduced tremendously over the past decade owing to a lot of factors. Benefit payments continue to outpace contributions in 13 of the last 20 years. The 9.4 percent contribution rate is one of the lowest in the world. Other factors such as economic, environment and demographic changes also account for the deterioration of the fund life.

Interest rates since the '90s have been on a decreasing pattern. With the global slowdown in economic growth, the investment climate has not been well. Also, the continued increase in life expectancy, has translated to a longer pension life. This has resulted to larger benefit payments, worsening the contributions-benefits imbalance.

Our 1999 valuation report shows that the fund life would last until 2015 with no pension increases. We are greatly interested in knowing how PARP came up with the expected SSS fund life of 2011.

—JOEL P. PALACIOS, assistant vice president, Media Affairs Department, Social Security System, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

When Johnny didn't come marching home

HIGH BLOOD

Edmundo D. Ladaw

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —Ed.

WITH THE OUTBREAK of World War II on Dec. 8. 1941, fear, anguish, pain and hunger—the horrors of war—descended on the lives of peace-loving Filipinos.

My brother, Juan Ladaw Jr. was aged 22 at the time. He was a member of the graduating Class '42 in the Ateneo de Manila College of Law. Manong Juaning, as we his siblings fondly called him, was the eldest of the 11 children of Judge Juan M. Ladaw Sr. and Anita Duarte. Mother had passed away two years before.

Manong Juaning was a skilled tennis player. In pre-war days, he was the acclaimed Philippine National Inter-Collegiate Tennis Champion. He was also responsible for Ateneo's domination of the NCAA Tennis crown. Local pre-war tennis fans knew him as Johnny Ladaw who ranked with tennis luminaries like Felisicimo Ampon, Amado Sanchez and Cesar Carmona.

Our home along Dominga Street was a stone's throw away from the Rizal Memorial Coliseum, where my brother was a regular fixture on the tennis courts. Some mornings, after a couple of sets, Johnny invited his tennis chums for breakfast or lunch at our house. Among them were the Japanese sports men from the Japanese Club on Taft Avenue situated next to the De La Salle College campus. One of them was a wealthy businessman who gifted us regularly with made-in-Japan rubber sneakers.

Johnny, together with his racquet-wielding friends, frequently participated in invitational tournaments organized by major tennis clubs around Luzon. One exhibition match in Camarines Sur necessitated the appropriation of a whole coach in the Bicol Express for the trip to that distant sports event.

The Philippine-Japan Tournament held in Manila saw Johnny defeating all his opponents, including the best in his rank. He made it to the finals and the chance to face Japan's No. 1 for the single's cup. It was a much awaited event and a large turn-out of tennis aficionados filled the stands. Local dailies headlined the decisive match, "All roads lead to Rizal Memorial" was a broadsheet's banner headline. Johnny dazzled the crowd with his sharp style and even strokes—power tennis was still unheard of. His opponent's skill matched his own and in spite of his best efforts the Philippines' favorite lost out to Japan's ace.

Dec. 8, a Monday morning, the country awoke to the shocking news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and their simultaneous bombing of our military installations. A great number of Filipino men were motivated into joining the Philippine Army as volunteers. That morning, Johnny hang up his racquet and proceeded to Padre Faura to report to his ROTC superior officer. As an ROTC graduate, cadets like him were eligible for immediate enlistment into the Armed Forces. However, to his dismay and the consternation of numerous cadets, the ROTC was disbanded for lack of armaments.

Unfazed, the volunteers headed for the PA headquarters. At Muralla in Intramuros, tents were pitched outside the walls to accommodate those hoping to be called for active service. And they waited all day up to nighttime. However, it seemed no orders were forthcoming.

Johnny obtained what he hankered for—a commission as third lieutenant with the Philippine Scouts—from Gen. Basilio Valdes.

In his soldier's uniform Johnny dropped in to bid us good-bye. His unit was shipped off to the battlefront in Mauban, Tayabas (Quezon province), where Japanese forces had just landed.

Our fighting men in Mauban were overcome by the numerical superiority of the Japanese. Retreat became the inevitable order.

Our troops headed northwest to Bataan. Word spread around that trucks for transporting them were to pass along Taft Avenue. Early on the expected day, we posted ourselves at the corner of Vito Cruz and Taft on the chance of getting a glimpse of Johnny. By mid-morning, the trucks came rumbling by from Pasay. The air was filled with the noise of the crowd clapping and greeting the soldiers with shouts of "Mabuhay!" Suddenly we spotted him at the rear of a truck that was about to drive past us. He happened to be facing our direction. I ran after the truck shouting his name and waving my arms. "Manong Juaning!" He heard me, shot me a weary smile and, with a nod of his head, waved back as the truck sped on. I was the last of our family to see Manong Juaning.

We were wrapped in fear and apprehension with the fall of Bataan. Did Manong Juaning survive, we wondered. With the ensuing Death March, Papa immediately mobilized us to find him. Our second oldest brother Marcelino, a cousin, Maximino, and myself set out for the trains in Tutuban station.

We encountered the soldiers in San Fernando, Pampanga. People who lined the highway tossed food, fruits and rice to the tired and wounded men. We shouted our brother's name on the chance the soldiers might know about his unit. "Juan Ladaw, Philippine Scouts!" They only shook their heads in response. We trailed them to Camp O' Donnell in Capas, Tarlac where they were incarcerated. We stayed there for several weeks, renting a house as our base. Every morning we waited outside the camp looking out for the trucks which conveyed prisoners to fields and marshes to gather *kangkong* for their meals.

Still we were unable to track down Manong Juaning; neither were we able to elicit information about his unit or any one of its members. In Panique, we again drew a blank as to their whereabouts. We pushed on to Cabanatuan where we discovered only American prisoners. For three months we doggedly pursued our mission. But there was no evidence of Manong Juaning and of his unit.

Back in Manila with a list of his unit's members and their addresses, we contacted their families but they were as anxiously in search as we were of the same information.

Meanwhile, our old tennis friends from the Japanese Club visited us. They arrived in cars which caused a stir in the neighborhood and embarrassed us no end because our surprise visitors were attired in military uniforms. Decorations on their chests and epaulets indicated their high rank in the Imperial Japanese Army. They came, they told us, as old friends and offered us assistance should the need arise. Papa was cordial but signified his regret that present circumstances were contretemps to the continuance of our association with them. Our former friends understood. They bowed respectfully and left. That was the last we saw of them.

In 1943, at a corner store in our neighborhood, another brother who came after me, Adolfo, then 14, was among the men and young boys who were unceremoniously hustled by the enemy into army trucks for compulsory out-of-town work only the Japanese soldiers knew where. This we learned from witnesses. We never saw Adolfo again.

After the Liberation in 1945, we learned that Johnny's unit—the 301st Anti-Tank Battalion—was completely wiped out; no one survived to tell about their story.

(Every National Heroes Day or on the anniversary of the Fall of Bataan, Willie Hernandez, the noted sports commentator and newspaper columnist, never failed to honor the memory of Johnny Ladaw. He lauded his tennis competence and the sacrifice of his life for his country as a brave volunteer soldier. In December 1989 the Ateneo University honored Juan Ladaw Jr. in the A de M Sports Hall of Fame. At the entrance of the Rizal Memorial Basketball arena was erected a marker to commemorate Philippine sportsmen who perished in the war, One of the names inscribed there is that of Juan Ladaw Jr.—for tennis.)

Edmundo D. Ladaw, 77, is a retired architect.

Bet for Masbate gov survives ambush

LEGAZPI CITY—After almost a month that her sister, who is running for a congressional seat, survived an ambush, gubernatorial candidate Fausto Seachon and his group were also ambushed Sunday night in Barangay San Vicente, Kawayan, Masbate, resulting in the killing of a candidate for councilor in Uson town and the wounding of four others.

Masbate police provincial director Senior Supt. Romeo Mapalo identified the casualty as Rene Dao, who is running for councilor in Uson town, and those wounded as Lino Lim, an incumbent councilor in Uson; Julius Ballesteros, aspirant for town councilor, and civilians Felicisimo Fernan and Antonio Lim.

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Convoy

Mapalo told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview that the victims were in a convoy of six vehicles from Uson to Kawayan town for a campaign sortie when about 10 unidentified armed men fired shots at them using M-16, caliber 7.62 and M203 rifles at about 9 p.m.

Seachon luckily survived the ambush unharmed.

Mapalo said they are looking at possible political angles as the motive for the attack.

Seachon is running opposite incumbent Gov. Antonio Kho.

Last month, his sister, Rizalina, who is running for a Congress seat opposite Olga Kho, wife of the incumbent governor, also survived an ambush but lost her three supporters who were all killed in the attack.

Mapalo earlier admitted that several armed groups were reported to have been imported from outside Masbate to serve as members of politicians' private armies.

Ranking

Masbate ranked number one in the number of incidents of election-related violence and number two in the entire country, based on Philippine National Police reports. *Joyce Mejillano, Ronnie Lorejo and Michael Jaucian, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Bets put one over Church's campaign

COTABATO CITY—Filipino ingenuity is still very much alive and popular in a remote municipality of North Cotabato that when politicians made use of it, it offended a Catholic priest.

Cotabato Archdiocesan priest Nuel Viernes said some politicians took the opportunity to campaign through the Church-based voter's education program.

Without naming the local candidates of the mountain town of Alamada, Viernes said, "they tried to destroy the credibility of the Church" when they reproduced voters' education leaflets distributed in Alamada.

He said he gave three copies of Church-made leaflets outlining voter's guidelines in choosing candidates to a local head of the Veterans Association.

Viernes' father is a member of the organization.

To his surprise, the organization's leader, only known as a certain Colonel Teczon, allowed the reproduction of three voter's education leaflets but with the local candidates' photos and platforms of government on the reverse side.

"This is unfair to the Church's efforts to educate our voters when they put their names in there," Viernes said, adding that it appears the Church is endorsing them.

"Besides, this is a clear violation of election laws," he said.

Lawyer Clarita Callar, Commission on Elections director for Central Mindanao, said if the report was true, then it was clearly a violation of election laws.

She vowed to send an investigative team to Alamada, a farming town located near the boundary of North Cotabato and Lanao del Sur.

Viernes appealed to all voters of Alamada to vote according to their conscience and not on the basis of Church-issued leaflets that bear the names of candidates.

"We do not endorse candidates, we only educate voters," he stressed.

North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol also ordered an investigation of Viernes' reports.

"This is unprofessional, unethical and a violation of the election laws," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Supporters of FPJ on Panay Island defect to GMA

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—With barely a week before the May 10 elections, a volunteer movement supporting the candidacy of action star Fernando Poe Jr. Sunday announced their defection to the camp of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The group, claiming of be composed of officials and members of the Filipinos for Peace, Justice and Progress Movement (FPJMP) in Western Visayas, said they have the support of the bulk of Poe supporters in the provinces of Iloilo, Aklan, Guimaras and Antique.

"We are waking up from a nightmare," said Eva Padernal, who claimed to be the chair of the FPJMP in Western Visayas.

But the FPJMP quickly disowned Padernal's group and downplayed the defection. "She (Padernal) resigned in February and she has no supporters because she does not represent the FPJ supporters in the region," Boots Cadsawan, FPJMP national president, told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Cadsawan said lawyer Joseph Arrojado has been the movement's regional chair since February.

Padernal said they have shifted their support to the President because Poe has no clear political platform. "We could not remain indifferent to the vague political and economic platform being presented by (Poe)," she said, reading from a prepared statement during a press conference at the Barcelo Sarabia Manor Hotel.

She read the statement in front of a huge poster of Poe with the FPJMP banner. They later handed the poster and other Poe campaign materials to officials of the Kasangga Ni Gloria, the President's own volunteer group.

Supporters of the President and even her only daughter, Evangelina Lourdes "Luli" Arroyo, apparent had prior knowledge of the defection and were present in the press conference.

Luli welcomed the defectors to her mother's camp. "It takes courage to move from (the camp of) one candidate to the other," she said. Also present were presidential assistant for Western Visayas Rene Villa and businessman Teodoro Haresco, founder of the Kasangga Ni Gloria.

Padernal said that by their defection they are also putting a stop to the "mockery of volunteerism." She described Poe's candidacy as based on "extreme idolatry" that borders on "blind faith, blind loyalty and worship-like devotion."

Poe was also ungrateful to his volunteers, said Padernal. "He did not even thanked us during his campaign sorties."

When asked why they are supporting the President and not another opposition candidate, she said they are "not believers" of the other candidates.

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Marcopper mining disaster big factor in Marinduque elections

BOAC, Marinduque—Almost a decade after mining operations wrought havoc and unparalleled destruction in some parts of Marinduque, 165 km southeast of Manila, the contentious mining issue was expected to be a factor in the voters' decision in the coming May 10 elections.

"The Marcopper tragedy is a significant factor for a significant number of voters here," Marinduque board member Adeline Angeles, said.

Greg Pedernal, official of Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement-Marinduque chapter, stressed that a candidate's stand toward the final resolution of the Marcopper tragedy should prevail as one of the voters' criteria.

"There are still lots of problems surrounding the Marcopper issue that greatly depend on the intervention and support of officials from the provincial capitol down to the local government unit," he said.

However, Angeles, who is running for vice governor as an independent candidate, said there are also Marinduqueños who are still "unconcerned and indifferent."

"Besides, it also depends on the place of residence of the voters," she said, further explaining that if the voters' area is not affected by the tragedy, "they could manifest a different attitude on the issue."

To stress her point, she said only the municipal governments of Mogpog and Boac towns have adopted a resolution declaring opposition to the resumption of mining activities in the province. But the towns of Sta. Cruz, Torrijos, Gasan and Buenavista have yet to adopt the same position.

The Maguila-guila Siltation Dam, built in 1991 by Marcopper from the headwaters of the Mogpog River to keep silt from a waste dump from entering the river, experienced a major breach in December 1993, after a strong typhoon hit the island.

The burst dam sent a rampaging flow of toxic mine waste and water that flooded several villages along its path, causing million-peso losses in farm products and damage to the river's ecosystem.

On March 24, 1996, a plug in a drainage tunnel of the Marcopper mines failed, dumping million of tons of toxic copper-bearing mine waste into the Makulapnit and Boac rivers.

The victims include not only those living along the banks of the Boac, Makulapnit and Mogpog rivers but also those along Calancan Bay in Sta. Cruz.

The mines were then being operated by Canada-based Placer Dome, the fifth largest gold mining company in the world with reported sales of more than $1.4 billion in 2000.

In December, Church leaders, Marinduque officials, non-government organizations and environmentalists declared renewal of commitment to protect the already fragile environment of the island-province. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Graft blamed for vegetable smuggling

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Administration officials have been blocking President Macapagal-Arroyo's attempts to stop smuggling and correct importation procedures to save the country's vegetable industry.

This was revealed by Hernando Golez, director of the Bureau of Plant Industry; Benjie Angeles, a consultant of Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. and Ernesto Ordoñez, former undersecretary for agriculture and trade during the second National Vegetable Congress here recently.

They said none of the agriculture officials linked to smuggling and spurious vegetable importation had been charged in court, even after they ignored Ms Macapagal's directive for a moratorium last year.

The President issued the directive in front of Benguet farmers during her Holy Week vacation last year.

Imports

The farmers had been rallying against the Macapagal administration because the salad vegetable imports had displaced local produce from the markets.

"I live this up to you, farmers during the elections," said Angeles, who now oversees the Department of Agriculture's anti-smuggling task force.

Angeles identified to congress participants several officials of the Bureau of Plant Industry and some import traders who were allegedly responsible for the continuing glut in imported salad vegetables.

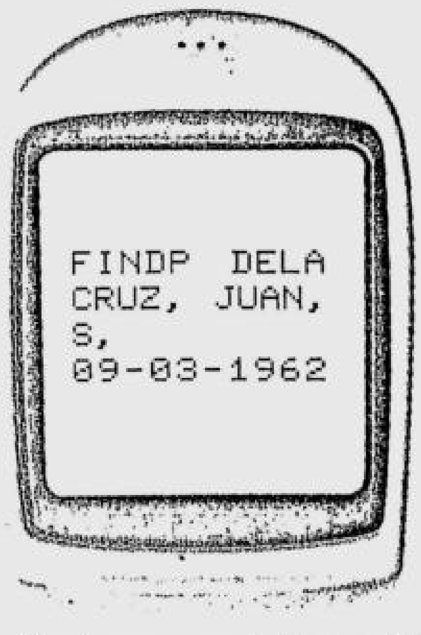
He also assailed the Bureau of Customs for releasing recently three container vans carrying undocumented shipments of carrots from China.

Defiance

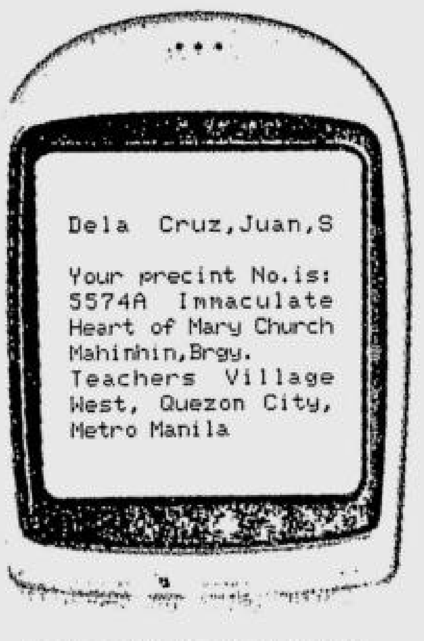
He said there was clear defiance among officials because customs officers continued to disregard a recently won tariff ruling that increased tax cuts for imported cabbages, carrots, broccoli and other high-value vegetables.

Several Cordillera farmers included Ms Macapagal among officials whom they believed were liable for the plight of vegetable farmers. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Ngayon, alamin ang inyong presinto sa text at internet.



I-text ang mga detalyeng ito.



Itong impormasyon ang makukuha ninyo.

Madali na ninyong makukuha sa text at internet kung saang eksaktong presinto kayo boboto sa May 10, 2004. Bawas hassle sa paghahanap. Bawas kalituhan. Ito'y serbisyong mamamayan ng Comelec para sa mas maayos na halalan.

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By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—With barely a week before the May 10 elections, a volunteer movement supporting the candidacy of action star Fernando Poe Jr. Sunday announced their defection to the camp of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The group, claiming of be composed of officials and members of the Filipinos for Peace, Justice and Progress Movement (FPJMP) in Western Visayas, said they have the support of the bulk of Poe supporters in the provinces of Iloilo, Aklan, Guimaras and Antique.

"We are waking up from a nightmare," said Eva Padernal, who claimed to be the chair of the FPJMP in Western Visayas.

But the FPJMP quickly disowned Padernal's group and downplayed the defection. "She (Padernal) resigned in February and she has no supporters because she does not represent the FPJ supporters in the region," Boots Cadsawan, FPJMP national president, told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Cadsawan said lawyer Joseph Arrojado has been the movement's regional chair since February.

Padernal said they have shifted their support to the President because Poe has no clear political platform. "We could not remain indifferent to the vague political and economic platform being presented by (Poe)," she said, reading from a prepared statement during a press conference at the Barcelo Sarabia Manor Hotel.

She read the statement in front of a huge poster of Poe with the FPJMP banner. They later handed the poster and other Poe campaign materials to officials of the Kasangga Ni Gloria, the President's own volunteer group.

Supporters of the President and even her only daughter, Evangelina Lourdes "Luli" Arroyo, apparent had prior knowledge of the defection and were present in the press conference.

Luli welcomed the defectors to her mother's camp. "It takes courage to move from (the camp of) one candidate to the other," she said. Also present were presidential assistant for Western Visayas Rene Villa and businessman Teodoro Haresco, founder of the Kasangga Ni Gloria.

Padernal said that by their defection they are also putting a stop to the "mockery of volunteerism." She described Poe's candidacy as based on "extreme idolatry" that borders on "blind faith, blind loyalty and worship-like devotion."

Poe was also ungrateful to his volunteers, said Padernal. "He did not even thanked us during his campaign sorties."

When asked why they are supporting the President and not another opposition candidate, she said they are "not believers" of the other candidates.

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Marcopper mining disaster big factor in Marinduque elections

BOAC, Marinduque—Almost a decade after mining operations wrought havoc and unparalleled destruction in some parts of Marinduque, 165 km southeast of Manila, the contentious mining issue was expected to be a factor in the voters' decision in the coming May 10 elections.

"The Marcopper tragedy is a significant factor for a significant number of voters here," Marinduque board member Adeline Angeles, said.

Greg Pedernal, official of Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement-Marinduque chapter, stressed that a candidate's stand toward the final resolution of the Marcopper tragedy should prevail as one of the voters' criteria.

"There are still lots of problems surrounding the Marcopper issue that greatly depend on the intervention and support of officials from the provincial capitol down to the local government unit," he said.

However, Angeles, who is running for vice governor as an independent candidate, said there are also Marinduqueños who are still "unconcerned and indifferent."

"Besides, it also depends on the place of residence of the voters," she said, further explaining that if the voters' area is not affected by the tragedy, "they could manifest a different attitude on the issue."

To stress her point, she said only the municipal governments of Mogpog and Boac towns have adopted a resolution declaring opposition to the resumption of mining activities in the province. But the towns of Sta. Cruz, Torrijos, Gasan and Buenavista have yet to adopt the same position.

The Maguila-guila Siltation Dam, built in 1991 by Marcopper from the headwaters of the Mogpog River to keep silt from a waste dump from entering the river, experienced a major breach in December 1993, after a strong typhoon hit the island.

The burst dam sent a rampaging flow of toxic mine waste and water that flooded several villages along its path, causing million-peso losses in farm products and damage to the river's ecosystem.

On March 24, 1996, a plug in a drainage tunnel of the Marcopper mines failed, dumping million of tons of toxic copper-bearing mine waste into the Makulapnit and Boac rivers.

The victims include not only those living along the banks of the Boac, Makulapnit and Mogpog rivers but also those along Calancan Bay in Sta. Cruz.

The mines were then being operated by Canada-based Placer Dome, the fifth largest gold mining company in the world with reported sales of more than $1.4 billion in 2000.

In December, Church leaders, Marinduque officials, non-government organizations and environmentalists declared renewal of commitment to protect the already fragile environment of the island-province. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Graft blamed for vegetable smuggling

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Administration officials have been blocking President Macapagal-Arroyo's attempts to stop smuggling and correct importation procedures to save the country's vegetable industry.

This was revealed by Hernando Golez, director of the Bureau of Plant Industry; Benjie Angeles, a consultant of Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. and Ernesto Ordoñez, former undersecretary for agriculture and trade during the second National Vegetable Congress here recently.

They said none of the agriculture officials linked to smuggling and spurious vegetable importation had been charged in court, even after they ignored Ms Macapagal's directive for a moratorium last year.

The President issued the directive in front of Benguet farmers during her Holy Week vacation last year.

Imports

The farmers had been rallying against the Macapagal administration because the salad vegetable imports had displaced local produce from the markets.

"I live this up to you, farmers during the elections," said Angeles, who now oversees the Department of Agriculture's anti-smuggling task force.

Angeles identified to congress participants several officials of the Bureau of Plant Industry and some import traders who were allegedly responsible for the continuing glut in imported salad vegetables.

He also assailed the Bureau of Customs for releasing recently three container vans carrying undocumented shipments of carrots from China.

Defiance

He said there was clear defiance among officials because customs officers continued to disregard a recently won tariff ruling that increased tax cuts for imported cabbages, carrots, broccoli and other high-value vegetables.

Several Cordillera farmers included Ms Macapagal among officials whom they believed were liable for the plight of vegetable farmers. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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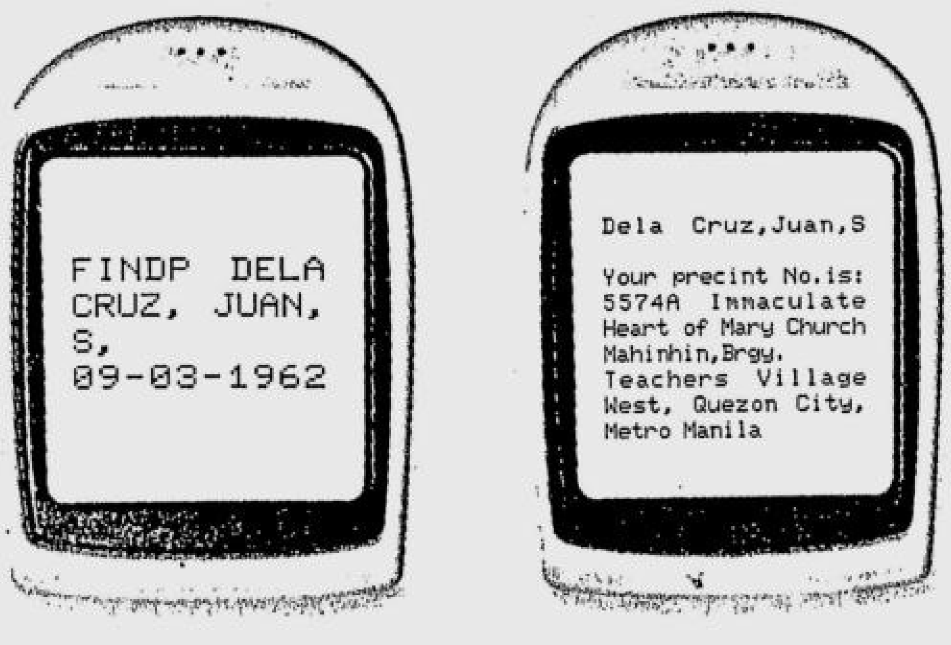

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Lack of forms slows issuance of land titles to Pinatubo folk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The lack of judicial forms, owing to debts of the Registry of Deeds to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, is one of the three causes of delay in the government's distribution of land titles to some 49,000 families displaced by Mt. Pinatubo's 1991 eruptions.

Flordelita Arrozal, deputy executive director of the Pinatubo Project Management Office of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC-PPMO), said the forms are actually the land titles bearing the state's official watermarks.

Arrozal said the BSP, which oversees the printing of the forms, has reduced the number of copies available to the ROD and its mother agency, the Land Registration Authority, as the agencies settle their obligations.

'Quite big'

The nature of these arrears was not immediately known but Arrozal said the amount was "quite big."

She clarified that the HUDCC-PPMO was not blaming the ROD for the delay in the release of the needed forms.

Its offices in Pampanga and Angeles City have fast-tracked the processing of legitimate claims whenever the forms are available, she said.

The House of Representatives' delay in declaring public lands-turned-resettlement sites as alienable and disposable areas has also slowed down the titling process.

Almost 17,000 families would have to wait longer as their problematic claims over lots and houses in resettlements would have to be resolved, Arrozal said.

The revalidation process has already covered 19,000 claimant-families, she said.

Since last year, the HUDCC-PPMO has issued land titles to about 7,000 families in five resettlements in Pampanga.

The latest recipients were 1,014 families from the Bulaon resettlement in this city. They came from Bacolor where the 56-km FVR Megadike had occupied nine out of the town's 21 villages.

Arrozal said the HDUCC-PPMO was trying every legal means possible to provide security of tenure to residents who were forced to relocate in the resettlements.

Exemption

The office previously settled a hitch in land titling by convincing the Bureau of Internal Revenue to exempt the settlers from paying capital gains taxes on the lots that they occupy in the resettlement sites.

The eruption of Mt. Pinatubo has changed the landscape of Central Luzon, dumping millions of cubic meters of ash and volcanic debris on farms, villages and otherwise thriving communities in Pampanga and parts of Zambales.

Succeeding lahar flows also all but wiped out the town of Bacolor in Pampanga, but residents there refused to give up and continue to try to rebuild their once bustling communities.

The fury of Mt. Pinatubo, once thought to be dormant, was not the only cause of the settlers' nightmares.

The debate over whether the resettlement lots should just be given to the displaced residents or sold to them also brought anxiety. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

ELECTION 2004

'Biyaheng Gloria' groups vow 13.5M votes

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

ANGELES CITY—An alliance of 20 national and regional organizations supporting President Macapagal-Arroyo's bid for a six-year term will deliver not less than 13.5 million votes on May 10 to secure her "victory with a wide margin."

This was announced by Alex Cauguiran, secretary general of the Pro-Gloria (Progressive and Responsive Organizations for Good Leadership, Outstanding Reforms and Intelligent Action), during the Angeles City leg of the Biyaheng Gloria nationwide caravan.

"Our plan is to get not less than 13.5 million votes from our member organizations. Numerically speaking, if there are 241,000 precincts (all over the country), we are mobilizing five volunteers for each precinct. We expect each volunteer to muster 10 pro-GMA voters. If you compute all that, the votes we can easily garner will not be lower than 13.5 million," Cauguiran told the INQUIRER.

According to him, the Pro-Gloria includes the Kaibigan ni GMA, Lakas Pinoy, Aguman Kapampangan, Kalipi, Bigkis Pinoy, Kaibigan Overseas Contract Workers, the tricycle federation Naftoda, E-Gloria, Team Gloria, Lakas Pinoy, Kaisambayan and Karancho.

The Biyaheng Gloria, which began on March 25 and would merge its south and north caravans on May 5, has collated the target support signatures of 3 million, Cauguiran said.

At the caravan's rally, which drew about 10,000 people at the Plaza Miranda here, Cauguiran urged the supporters of Ms Macapagal to be vigilant against electoral fraud.

"We don't believe what other camps have said that the President's winning will be accompanied by cheating. We deny that, we are against that. As a matter of fact, we are joining forces with all peace-loving Filipinos to see to it that there is clean and honest election," he said.

Asked who among the presidential candidates would force a victory through fraud, Cauguiran answered in Filipino: "It's difficult to disclose. But if we based that on history, who among the candidates experienced vote shaving and padding? None of them are in the President's camp."

A clean election is "so important because it will move the country forward in the next six years," he said.

BYAHENG GLORIA

TIRELESS effort for supporters of Ms Macapagal whose caravan stops by in Angeles City in their bid to gather 8 million signatures in support of the President and deliver 13.5 million votes for a full six-year term for her.

JOAN BONDOC

Gov asks breakaway rebs not to support any bet

BACOLOD CITY—Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Marañon has called on the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB) not to coerce people in favor of certain candidates.

"They claim to be non-partisan but information we have gathered is that they are siding with one party, especially in the fifth district," he said.

He, however, did not name the political party. Presidential brother-in-law Ignacio Arroyo is running for representative in the fifth district of Negros Occidental against incumbent Rep. Apolinario Lozada.

The governor said he received complaints that in remote areas of EB Magalona and Talisay towns, some RPA-ABB members were harassing local candidates.

Marañon asked Supt. Mark Edison Belarma, acting provincial director, to investigate the complaints.

RPA-ABB national commander Carapali Lualhati denied the allegation, saying the breakaway faction was not supporting any candidate.

"As a revolutionary armed organization, we have never indulged in a campaign for any candidate," he said.

"However, we teach the people to be vigilant in exercising their right to vote, they should not allow themselves to be intimidated," he added.

Marsha Cordero, Commission on Elections provincial supervisor, said the police should look into the allegations against the RPA-ABB.

"Everybody has the freedom to campaign for the candidates of their choice, but they should not carry guns with them," she said.

"It is the job of the police to put a stop to those intimidating the people," she added.

Lualhati asked for specific instances on the allegations against the RPA-ABB so they could answer these and face their accusers.

He, however, said he received reports that one group in Talisay was behind the alleged intimidation of voters.

"We have monitored this kind of practice not only in Talisay but (also) in Don Salvador Benedicto and Escalante. We have heard of barangay captains and residents in Don Salvador Benedicto being intimidated," he said. *Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Napocor assures power supply during elections

DUMAGUETE CITY—The National Power Corp. (Napocor) and the two electric cooperatives in Negros Oriental have each put up a contingency plan to ensure that power services will not be disrupted during the May 10 elections.

Engineer Jerry Ceniza, Napocor operations manager here, said their office created a task force in February to prepare for the coming elections.

Contingency

The Negros Oriental I Electric Cooperative (Noreco I) and Negros Oriental II Electric Cooperative (Noreco II) are also putting up separate contingency plans for the elections.

Ceniza said all the power plants and other installations of the Napocor in Negros Oriental will be closely guarded by policemen. He did not elaborate for security reasons.

Negros Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz earlier requested the Philippine Army to secure the Napocor's power plants and Philippine National Oil Company because of the threat from New People's Army.

Ceniza said any attack on their power plants will affect not only Negros Oriental but the islands of Negros and Panay as well.

The Napocor generates more than 170 megawatts of geothermal energy, which is being supplied to the islands of Negros and Panay.

Jun Jaculbe, Noreco I engineering manager, assured that they had already finalized the contingency plan to ensure a continued supply of power during the elections.

They had also assigned personnel to work round-the-clock on May 10, he added.

The Noreco I supplies electricity to two cities and eight towns in northern Negros Oriental.

Preparations

Also preparing for the elections is the Noreco II, which services three cities and 11 towns in the province's second and third districts.

Christina Tiongson, Noreco II administrative officer, said they were prepared for any eventuality during the elections. *Romy G. Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

NPAs kill head of Monkayo village chiefs

DAVAO CITY—Suspected members of the New People's Army (NPA) shot dead the president of the Association of Barangay Captains (ABC) in Monkayo town in Compostela Valley Sunday night.

Senior Supt. Jaime Morente, provincial police chief, said the killing of barangay chair Arturo Baltazar was the third election-related incident in Monkayo since the campaign started.

On March 18, unidentified suspects lobbed a grenade at the house of Monkayo Vice Mayor Domingo Estrada. The suspects missed Estrada, who is running for mayor, as he was in his neighbor's house during the attack. But his nephew Franklin Estrada and house help Jessielyn Bayabay were wounded.

Estrada, who topped the election as municipal councilor, was appointed as vice mayor as Rizal Gentuyaga replaced Mayor Joel Brillantes who was killed last year in a cockpit in Davao City. Gentuyaga is also running for mayor.

Last week, a barangay kagawad, who was actively campaigning for reelectionist Rep. Manuel Zamora was shot dead by motorcycle-riding suspects in Barangay Olaycon. *Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Negros poll exec tells bets to wage clean campaign

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—A ranking Negros Occidental election official called on candidates to end what she said were scandalous, scurrilous and libelous forms of campaign as the elections draw near.

Marsha Cordero made the appeal at the signing of a peace covenant among candidates from the cities of Bacolod, Silay and Talisay.

Cordero said she noted that the words used by radio and TV blocktimers, who were hired by candidates, were "offensive to morals and were those that we would not like our children to hear."

She called on candidates to be professional during the last leg of the campaign by informing the people of what they intended to do if elected into office.

Cordero assured the candidates that the Commission on Elections (Comelec) in Negros Occidental was doing everything to ensure that the voters' lists had been purged of the names of double registrants, the dead and those who had transferred polling areas.

"We will keep the polls clean," she said.

She said she also directed the police to step up the manning of checkpoints starting yesterday, a week before the May 10 elections, to prevent any outbreak of violence.

Scenes across the country show blatant violations of election rules, particularly on the posting of campaign materials.

Posters of candidates are found in almost every available space on the streets and in some areas, local Comelec personnel take the initiative to remove illegally pasted campaign posters.

Other violations in the past include overspending but no one had been charged with this.

Some candidates are also involved in dirty tricks, including black propaganda campaigns against their rivals.

Woman mayor bet drops bid against hubby

TARRAGONA, Davao Oriental—Twelve days before election day, Tarragona town Mayor Aurora Enriquez has decided to drop her reelection bid to give way to her husband who is running against her.

Provincial election supervisor Remlane Tambuang said Enriquez had formally withdrawn her reelection bid on Friday at the Commission on Elections in the capital town of Mati.

"The reason given was that she would instead support her husband, Rogelio, who is running against her," Tambuang told reporters here.

Supporters of the Enriquez couple were baffled when the two decided to run for mayor. It started speculations that the Enriquezes were not in good terms.

"We have never seen the couple quarreling before the public. Up to now that Mayor Enriquez has already dropped her reelection bid, they did not bother to tell their supporters the reason they both ran for mayor," a resident said.

But Rogelio has his reason.

"My wife's failing health prompted her to withdraw her candidacy. That's the reason I also run for mayor because it was her instructions. It's not that we were not in good terms," Rogelio told the INQUIRER.

Rogelio said his wife "could hardly walk and talk." *Ferdinand O. Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Tanong ng Bayan
InqTV
Ngayong Alas-10 Ng Gabi

Kilala naman sila, ba't tagilid ang tsansa?

Base sa pinakahuling SWS survey, walong kandidatong senador ang nasa bingit ng alanganin. Sina Maceda, Barbers, Biazon, (Pia) Cayetano, Herrera, Jaworski, Tatad, at Mercado ay nag-aagawan sa huling puwesto. Paano ba nagkaganito? Nakapanayam ng InqTV ang apat sa kanila. Tunghayan ngayong alas-10 ng gabi, sa ABC.
(May replay bukas, alas-8 ng umaga.)

ABC

SARANGANI FUND SCAM

Whistle-blower calls for gov's rejection

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—The whistle-blower in the multimillion-peso fund scam in Sarangani province has urged voters to reject the reelection bid of Gov. Miguel Escobar and other elected officials of the province linked to the scam.

Mary Ann Gadian, who is now hiding in an undisclosed place for fear of her life, urged the voters in Sarangani not to give Escobar another chance to rule in the province.

Gadian's exposé was used by the Commission on Audit (COA) and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) as basis in getting to the bottom of the P41-million fund scandal in the province.

On several occasions, Escobar and others implicated in the scam denied any participation in the illegal diversion of government funds.

They pointed to Gadian as the alleged mastermind.

Gadian, however, asked "can a lowly employee be a mastermind of a multimillion fund anomaly without sanction from superiors?"

Escobar, Vice Gov. Felipe Constantino, 11 board members and several capitol employees are facing criminal and administrative graft charges before the Ombudsman in connection with said fund scandal.

The Office of the Ombudsman-Mindanao had already issued a 60-day preventive suspension order against 14 appointive capitol employees tagged as conspirators in the systematic looting of government funds in the province.

But Escobar, who was asked by the anti-graft body to immediately implement the suspension, has yet to act on it.

Gadian further said she decided to come out into the open to help the residents of the province decide wisely this coming May 10 elections.

"I feel like I wanted to beat them (Escobar, et al) up. I'm so mad at them for using me for their own personal aggrandizement," a visibly irked Gadian told reporters here.

In her exposé, Gadian claimed that she falsified documents, forged signatures of supposed beneficiaries and facilitated the hasty release of funds for fake cooperatives upon the orders of her superiors.

She denied the accusation that some politicians are using her to destroy Escobar and his group.

"It was enough that I was used by corrupt politicians. I will no longer allow myself to be used again by any politician," she said from her hiding place.

She told reporters that she was now living quite a miserable life.

Her family subsists on financial donations from their families, relatives and friends.

"My life has never been the same. I am constantly on the run. I am not free to go where I want to," she narrated. *Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Stay fit, practice more, shoot better, cops told

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

STAY fit. And try to practice even without ammunition.

The advice goes to the Northern Police District policemen who did not qualify as good shooters based on the results of a marksmanship proficiency test. It comes from district director Marcelino Franco, who acknowledges that lack of funds has partly affected the capability of his men.

Out of the 203 policemen who had undertaken the test, only 12 qualified as marksmen. Based on the standards used, the highest status would have been expert. This would be followed by sharpshooters then by shooters under marksman status.

But Franco said "this does not mean my policemen are not good."

He said he had expected low scores from his policemen, citing the high standards used in the test and the lack of training in target shooting of his policemen.

Lack of funds

Asked why there had been no regular training, Franco blamed lack of funding from the government.

Nevertheless, Franco advised his men to practice even dry firing—drawing a gun, aiming it without firing or using ammunition. This would hone the muscles and improve the coordination between the senses.

PO3 Aldrin Vitales, 30, who ranked 10th based on the initial results, told the INQUIRER yesterday he used to go to shooting ranges when he was younger. He added he also practices dry firing every day.

But in his eight years in the service, he had not yet figured in any gunfight.

Good thing

Franco added that practice would instill confidence, which was important in using firearms. One thing good about the proficiency test: a policeman who got low scores now knows he needs more training.

"If you know your capacity, you would know how to react in a given situation," he said.

The marksmanship tests began on April 13 and was temporarily suspended on April 28 for the policemen to concentrate on the elections. There are still 134 policemen who would still have to undergo the test.

Bets intensify gimmicks as May 10 nears

MOTORCADES. Longer campaign hours. And training of poll watchers.

With only five days remaining before the elections, candidates and their supporters are intensifying their campaign gimmicks.

In Valenzuela City, the camps of rival politicians have scheduled another round of motorcades. The other day, Rep. Magtanggol Gunigundo's party held a motorcade around the city's first district. Tomorrow, they would have another motorcade in the second district.

On Thursday and Friday, it would be Rita Carlos and her party's turn to hold motorcades around the city, while Rep. Sherwin Gatchalian's party would have their motorcade on Saturday, the last day of campaign.

Carlos, wife of the incumbent mayor, Gatchalian and Gunigundo are all running for mayor.

Carlos also said she had increased the number of hours she was spending for house to house visits. She now wakes up at 5 a.m. and goes out of her house by 7 a.m. to visit houses.

Gunigundo also said they had been training their poll watchers and leaders for the election day.

Gatchalian said they had administered seminars for their poll watchers. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Cyril Bonabente*

PERFECT SPOT
A shoe repairman has apparently found a perfect spot to do his thing, amid a stack of ballot boxes at the Commission on Elections offices in Intramuros, Manila. JESS YUSON

Why cops don't know how to shoot

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

NINE out of 10 policemen at the Northern Police District (NPD) can't shoot straight, according to a news item at the Metro section of the INQUIRER yesterday.

The same number is true in all police districts—Central Police, Western Police, Southern Police and Eastern Police—in Metro Manila, as well as in other parts of the country.

Yes, 90 percent of the country's policemen don't know how to handle a gun. They can't be relied upon to hit a criminal who can shoot back during an armed confrontation.

But can you blame our policemen for being lousy shots? They're not given ammunition for practice. Those who become proficient with their service firearms buy ammunition outside and practice on their own.

That's why we have shooting ranges in police camps or precincts but they're not used by cops but by civilians.

The only time the cops are taught how to shoot is during their stint at the police academy or training schools.

And how many rounds of ammo are they given for practice? One magazine round. That's 15 rounds of 9 mm ammunition for a Beretta pistol and seven rounds for .45 caliber pistol. Nothing more.

Now, how do you expect a cop to be proficient with a supply of 15 rounds of ammunition for target practice up to the time of his retirement?

* * *

The reason cops avoid armed confrontation with criminals is because of their deficiency in handling their weapons.

Ah, but cops are smart when dealing with criminals! They don't waste their bullets. Policemen shoot criminals at close range when their hands are tied. Look at what Panfilo Lacson's men did to the captured members of the notorious Kuratong Baleleng gang a couple of years ago. They shot the bank robbery suspects while they were tied up and made it appear that it was a two-way shootout.

* * *

Two months ago, I was an eyewitness to a hostage incident in Cubao, Quezon City, where a drug-crazed man wrestled a gun from a security guard and held two women passersby hostage one after the other.

Several cops responded, albeit belatedly. They had the chance to shoot the hostage-taker from behind a cement post, but they didn't. The hostage-taker was able to get near the cops and shot one of them dead before he was killed himself.

The few seconds of hesitation cost the life of a cop who was new on the beat.

Apparently, the poor fellow didn't know how to fire his gun!

As a police reporter for the defunct Times Journal and the Manila Bulletin in the middle 1970s up to 1986, I've come across reports of cops being killed by criminals because they didn't know how to shoot.

For example, a bag snatcher in Sta. Cruz, Manila, killed two traffic policemen with his fan knife. The thief got back at the cops one after the other after they failed to hit him as he was running away.

Imagine a fan-knife wielding thief beating two cops holding two revolvers! Only in the Philippines.

Unsightly posters? 'Eat' them away

By Margaux Ortiz

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority has found a new way to remove campaign posters scattered all over the metropolis after the elections.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday announced that instead of merely scraping the campaign materials from walls, the agency would be using a special enzyme to "eat" the starch used as adhesive.

"Scraping is tedious and untidy," Fernando said, adding that the enzymes would neatly peel off the posters' adhesive, barely leaving any marks.

The MMDA chair said they would test the effectiveness of the new method this week, spraying the enzymes on materials on illegal posting areas.

Fernando said that if the experiment proves effective, they would be using the enzymes to remove all the posters in Metro Manila beginning May 11.

Fernando added that this was not the first time they used chemicals in their projects.

He said that for six months now, the agency has been spraying underpass and roadside walls with chemicals to remove the grime.

The MMDA chair also stressed that if their experiment with the enzymes works, they could remove all the posters a week after election day.

Meanwhile, an MMDA mobile patrol apprehended a driver of a jeepney with an improvised plate in West Avenue, Quezon City, yesterday.

The Isuzu jeepney, driven by Christian Dy, 24, of Binondo, Manila, contained bundles of anti-administration posters which said "*Iboboto nyo pa ba si Mrs. Pidal? Nakakatakot po* (Would you still vote for Mrs. Pidal? That's scary)."

Threats throw GMA aides in confusion

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THREATS on President Macapagal-Arroyo's life by terrorists and disgruntled politicians have thrown her campaign into a mild confusion as Malacañang declared it was treating these intelligence reports seriously.

"The threats on the President's life are real and nobody is taking any chances as the nation prepares to vote," said presidential campaign spokesperson Ignacio Bunye.

"We don't want to underestimate the desperation of terrorist groups or any unscrupulous elements to carry out an attempt on the life of the President," he said.

Bunye revealed that the Presidential Security Group has become more stringent in its security measures to ensure the safety of the President, whose strategists have to reboot the last stage of her campaign schedule.

The National Security Council convened last Sunday to discuss the seriousness of the threats of bombing attacks on the President both in her public appearances and during transit in the last few days before the May 10 polls.

It suggested that the four-day sea and land caravan from Mindanao to Visayas and Luzon be scrapped and that the President limit her travels within the Luzon island this week.

Malacañang was in a tizzy almost all day yesterday as the President's handlers could not make up their mind on whether or not the President should proceed with her visit to Naga and Legazpi.

Presidential campaign spokesperson Michael Defensor said his staff has put all the President's scheduled sorties on hold until the PSG has cleared them.

Despite some snafus in the late stages of the campaign, Defensor said these were unlikely to impact on the President's popularity, which has grown steadily.

Man torches house, is killed by wife

By Tina Santos

A 24-YEAR-OLD housewife landed in jail after killing her husband, who allegedly tried to set their house on fire Sunday night in Quezon City.

Suspect Marlene Gumiason reportedly stabbed dead her husband Danilo, a carpenter, after engaging in a heated argument at 8:20 p.m. inside their house on Postal Street, NIA Road, Barangay Pinyahan, police said.

Neighbors rushed the victim, who sustained a lone stab wound in the left side of the body, to the East Avenue Medical Center. However, he died while undergoing treatment.

The victim, who was allegedly drunk, reportedly tried to get hold of a match and attempted to set the suspect's clothes and their house on fire.

The victim allegedly refused to stop despite repeated pleas by the suspect, prompting the latter to grab a knife and stab the former.

Comelec says foiled bomb plot meant to destabilize polls

By Martin P. Marfil

ELECTION officials yesterday said that the foiled bomb attempt against their offices on Saturday was meant to destabilize the elections and embarrass the government.

Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos said that he didn't think that it was meant for anyone in particular but was part of a destabilization attempt by "lawless elements."

This was echoed by Election Commissioner Resurreccion Borra, who admitted that the Comelec had been receiving threats which, he said, was usually the case whenever elections are held.

"The Comelec had been receiving and we have been monitoring these kinds of threats because this is part of political destabilization and to embarrass the government particularly during this election period, that is, to put us in a spot," Borra said.

"In every election, this is an expected threat. That is why we have already intensified our security measures," he added.

According to Borra, the threats come from different groups like losing politicians who blame Comelec for their losses and politically motivated groups.

He said that the military and the police have identified several groups like the New People's Army, the Abu Sayyaf and Partisan Armed Groups or Pags.

Asked if military mutineers were included in the list, he said that there was no mention of the Oakwood group but added that they were being monitored.

The attempt to bomb the Comelec office was made on Saturday but was foiled by police who arrested two suspected Abu Sayyaf members.

Cops put Metro under tight...

From page A18

don, 33, and Arjie Sama, 35.

The alleged Abu Sayyaf terrorists were arrested after they were chanced upon a police checkpoint near the Commission on Elections building on Cabildo Street in Intramuros at around 7:30 p.m.

Big haul

Bandon and Sama proved to be a big haul after their Toyota Tamaraw FX van yielded an improvised 60 mm mortar bomb ready for detonation using a cellular phone.

Authorities said the seized explosives could have damaged an area as big as around two basketball courts.

"A 25-meter radius could have been damaged upon impact," said National Capital Region Police Office Director Ricardo de Leon yesterday.

Authorities claimed the suspects were about to bomb the Comelec building shortly before they were arrested.

The Intramuros operation led to a raid in Maharlika Village, a Muslim enclave in Taguig, at around 4:30 a.m. Sunday morning. But suspects Bensaudi Luminda, Mashur "Max" Jundam and Manor Otap escaped.

Bandon and Sama claimed during interrogation that the three suspects were involved in the plot to bomb targets in Metro Manila.

Misuari aide?

The INQUIRER learned that Jundam is the "right-hand man" of jailed Moro National Liberation Front chief Nur Misuari and a professor at the University of the Philippines' Institute for Islamic Studies.

"He's someone we can call an academic radical," a longtime neighbor told the INQUIRER.

The source, a ranking leader in the Muslim community, described Luminda, who is running for councilor in Taguig, as a respected leader in Maharlika.

"He's the one who settles disputes among residents coming from different tribes in Mindanao here," the neighbor said.

ERN POLICE DISTRICT
POST BLAST RECONSTRUCTION
AF K RSP

SUSPECTED Abu Sayyaf members Quirino Bandon (left) and Arjie Sama are presented to the media Monday together with the photos of the explosives allegedly seized from them. JESS YUSON

FOUR DIGIT
1 9 3 2
(In exact order)
SUERTRES
7 5 8

MEGALOTTO 6/45
1 18 25 37 42 43

AFTER DISCOVERY OF TERROR BOMB PLOT

Cops put Metro under tight security

By C. V. Esguerra

POLICE have tightened security around strategic areas in Metro Manila following the discovery of a new terrorist plot with the arrest of two suspected Abu Sayyaf terrorists in Manila Saturday.

More uniformed and undercover police officers have been deployed in shopping malls, embassies, train stations and other possible targets, said Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, Philippine National Police spokesperson.

The PNP has also beefed up security at the Pandacan oil depot, a perennial target of terrorist plots considering the tons of petroleum and other highly flammable materials stocked there.

Goltiao said more officers will also be seen patrolling the streets "to make it difficult for terrorists to strike."

"The Abu Sayyaf threat remains and we don't want any terrorist activity to happen, especially in time for the elections," he said.

More mobile checkpoints will also be set up all over the metropolis. There are currently at least four checkpoints in each of the five police districts in Metro Manila, according to Goltiao.

A key to preventing bombings, he said, is the intensified intelligence operations police and the military have been conducting following reports that the Abu Sayyaf was planning to sow chaos in the metropolis.

Police have identified those arrested as Quirino "Kens" Ban-

COPS/A17

Marikina employees on bikes

DON'T be surprised when you see employees at the Marikina City hall going to work on bikes, not cars, soon.

The city has recently launched "Eco-Bike," a program aimed at promoting the use of bicycles in the city.

And to encourage employees to use bikes, the city is providing them with a P2,000 bicycle grant which they can avail of anytime starting today.

An employee has the option to pay the loan within six months, according to a contract form distributed to employees yesterday.

Marikina is one of only a few cities in the country with bike lanes on almost all roads, thanks to the World Bank.

On April 24, the city sponsored the Marikina-San Mateo Mountain Bike Adventure Race. April 26 was declared "Bike Day" for city employees. *Donna Potes*

PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO'S ANTI-GRAFT CAMPAIGN

THE REAL SCORE

THE WORLD BANK JUDGMENT:

"Since the Present administration assumed office on a platform of anti-corruption and good governance-programs, much has been done to improve governance..."

—Phillippine Development Policy Update (October 29, 2003)

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM'S 2003-2004 GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS REPORT

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

More gov't execs flunk lifestyle check

INQUIRER

Peso recovers despite cut in its credit rating

5 execs fail lifestyle check

Bird flu hits S. Korea, spreads to China

"The country's score on the Corruption Subindex improved (in 2003) to 3.39 from 3.07."

A good governance measure, the Public Institutions Index for the country improved to 3.29 from 3.11. - MBC Research Report No. 52 (November 2003)

HOW? Among the package of measures implemented by the Arroyo administration are:

- Unprecedented "lifestyle" checks that led to Ombudsman cases against 80 high-ranking officials
- Uncompromising stance against corruption: PGMA junked the corruption- infested PIATCO deal, which the Supreme Court upheld several months later
- PGMA's full support for the Ombudsman through additional funding doubling the number of prosecutors from 52 to 104 increasing the graft Investigators from original 37 to 96 and hiring 24 additional support staff.
- Strengthening of the Internal Audit System
- Establishment of anti-corruption units in the Office of the President (Presidential Anti-Graft Commission and the Transparency Group) and in the Department of Finance (for Customs and BIR)
- Transparency through Internet-based bidding for government purchases

ALL ALLEGATIONS OF CORRUPTION AT HIGH LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT WERE INVESTIGATED BY CONGRESS. ALL HAVE FIZZLED OUT AND PROVEN AS FABRICATIONS, BLACK PROPAGANDA HURLED BY THE OPPOSITION.

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SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Mangulat

BASKETBALL: NBA Playoffs-Nets vs Pistons, Game 1. Eastern Semifinals; 8 a.m. (r-8 p.m.): Solar Sports—New Jersey is expected not to get any royal treatment at the Palace of Auburn Hills as Detroit hosts the first game of their semifinal series.

TENNIS: Telecom Italia Masters; 11 a.m., 8:30 p.m. and 11 p.m.: Star Sports—First round action continues in Rome.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

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PACQUIAO in deep training in Los Angeles for his May 9 fight against Marquez. DAN TRINIDAD

Team Pacquiao nails 1st big point

By Recah Trinidad

LOS ANGELES, California—The routine countdown was shelved and the Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez skirmish had an unscheduled start outside the ring over the weekend.

The Philippine side scored the first big point.

With both combatants in danger of losing everything , there's a growing consensus the 12-round championship may not go the full distance.

But Team Pacquiao achieved a degree of success well ahead of the championship after Murad Muhammad, Pacquiao's promoter in the USA, haggled and succeeded in replacing one of three judges initially offered to work the championship.

Pacquiao's business manager, Rod Nazario, told the INQUIRER that Murad batted instead for the inclusion of a Canadian judge over the unidentified official who had allegedly been found to have some links with Bob Arum, the American promoter of Marquez.

Murad yesterday confirmed

TEAM/ A20

Rosales rules LPGA meet, pockets ₱13M

/Page 1

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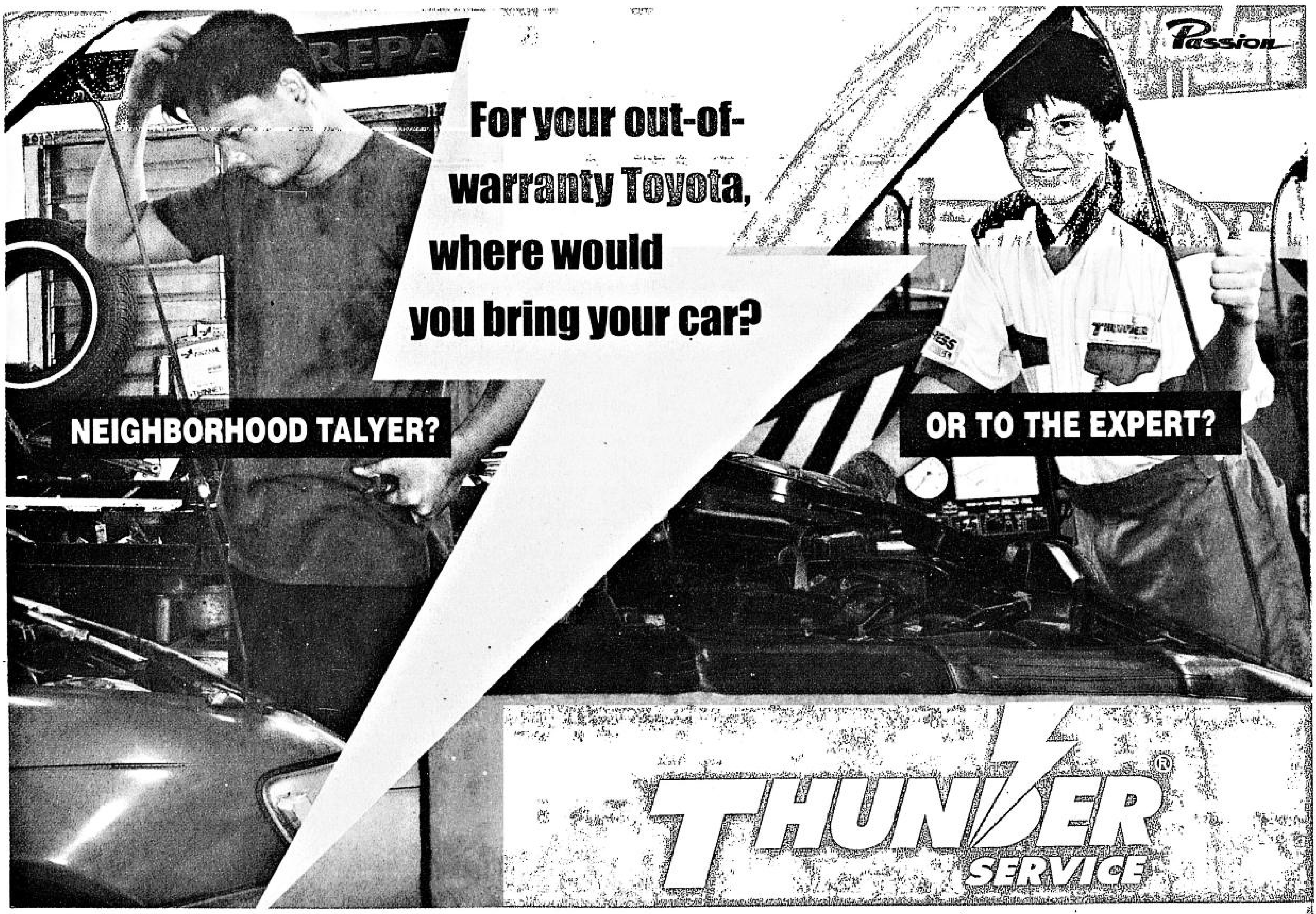
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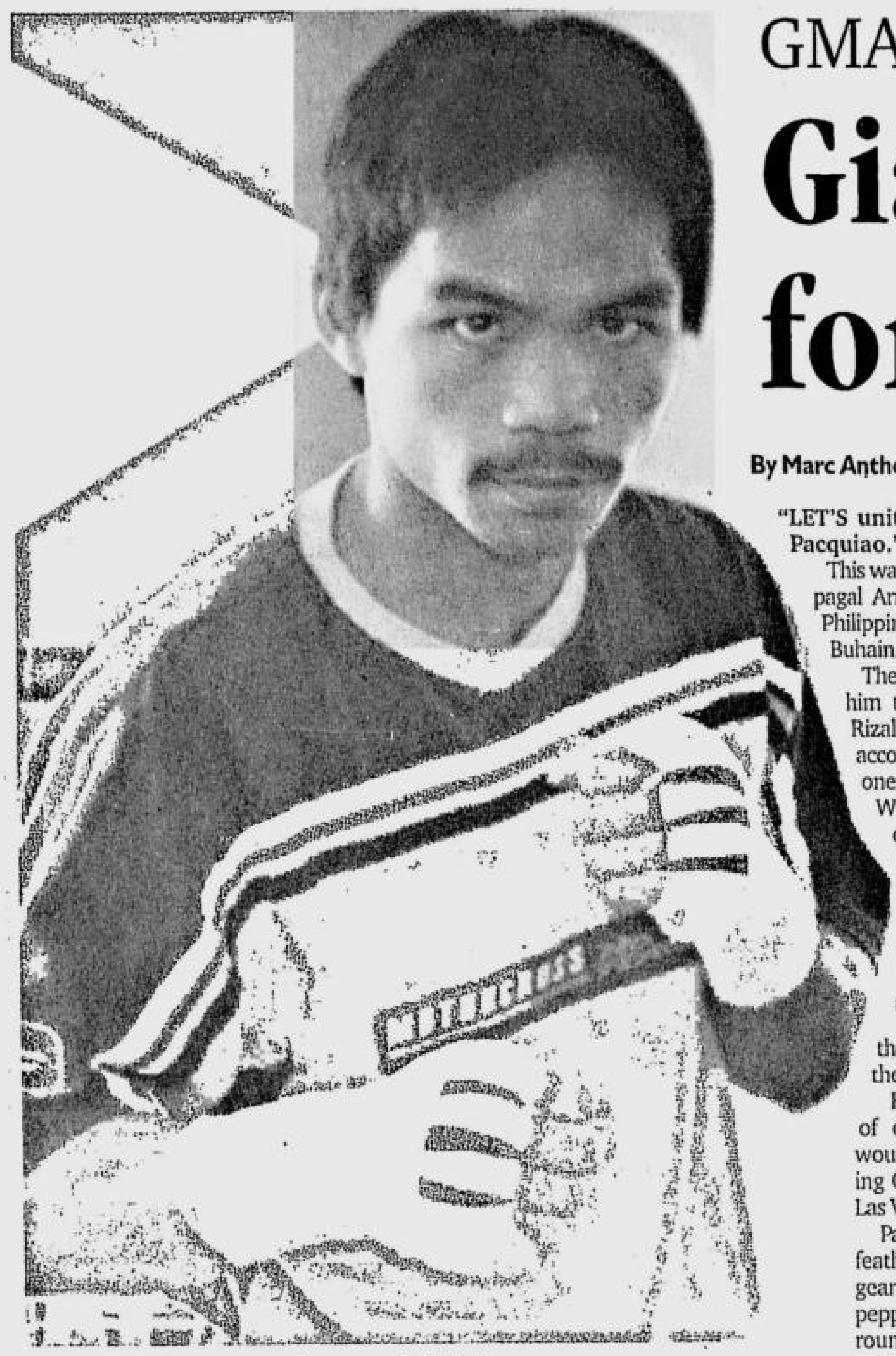


PACQUIAO: Just two pounds over weight limit. DAN TRINIDAD

GMA OFFERING

Giant screen available for Manny-Juan fight

By Marc Anthony Reyes

"LET'S unite as one nation behind Manny Pacquiao."

This was the appeal made by President Macapagal Arroyo yesterday as conveyed through Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain.

The PSC chief said Ms Arroyo ordered him to make special preparations at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex which will accommodate fans wanting to watch the one and only Filipino champ go for the WBA and IBF featherweight championships.

"She said the whole nation must come together to pray for Manny, and for once forget about politics to support a common cause," Buhain said.

The President, added Buhain, has called on the nation to watch the fight on television as Pacquiao slugs it out for boxing glory.

Pacquiao, the People's featherweight champ, is set to fight title-holder Juan Manuel Marquez on May 8 (Sunday in Manila) at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Fight day is on the eve of the national elections where President Arroyo is running for another term.

"A victory for Manny is a victory for all sports-loving Filipinos in as much as casting our votes on May 10 is a victory to our country's democracy," said Buhain.

Buhain added that half of the 800 national athletes will be gathered at the RMSC where a giant screen will be put up so they can all "cheer together" for Pacquiao.

Pacquiao became the acknowledged featherweight king of the world after his victory over the legendary Marco Antonio Barrera last Nov. 16 at the Alamodome in Texas.

Pacquiao has been training under the watchful eyes of Freddie Roach in Los Angeles since last month after the fight was scheduled.

For his victory over Barrera, Ms Arroyo gave Pacquiao a P1 million incentive on top of his winnings reportedly amounting to $350,000.

Team Pacquiao nails 1st big point

From page A19

there have been a last minute change in the original composition of the judges.

He said he would give the complete list of officials once Team Pacquiao, which wound up its schedule at the Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood Sunday, reaches the Las Vegas championship site Monday.

Pacquiao, only two pounds over the featherweight limit, rounded up his training gear with a three-round sparring against a peppery bantamweight. He has totaled 135 rounds of sparring for the Marquez fight against only 102 for the Marco Antonio Barrera bout last year.

The significance of the points scored by Team Pacquiao was hard to determine considering that the judges may not have a say in the fight that could end by stoppage.

But Nazario said they have to be obsessive in guarding against outside forces, recalling an incident last July when Pacquiao was nearly thrown off-balance by allegations he had hepatitis on the eve of his bout against Emmanuel Lucero, whom he stopped in three rounds.

There were reported efforts by the opposing camp to picture Pacquiao as a dirty fighter.

However, Pacquiao, who continued to draw raves with his splendid form, laughed off the attempted distractions.

With big bets expected to be placed in the run-up to the title fight, Pacquiao yesterday again thanked his countrymen and advised supporters not to get carried away.

He said they could place fun bets at him but they should not gamble.

"*Ayokong gawing sugal ang* boxing (I don't want to turn boxing into gambling)," he told the INQUIRER.

Samsung meet starts at Southwoods today

FRONTLINERS of Manila Southwoods and Canlubang stable of talents cross paths anew in a championship division showdown that should provide the fireworks to the kick-off leg of the third season of the Samsung Amateur Tour at the Legends course of the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club in Carmona, Cavite.

What used to be a simple 36-hole duel has become a full-blown 72-hole battle and the big names in the 27-man roster led by Juvic Pagunsan, Tommy Manotoc, Jay Bayron and Jun Bernis for the Canlubang side and Young Turks like Mike Bibat, Gene Bondoc, Toru Nakajima and club champion Bong Brobio for Southwoods are in for another big challenge.

Also among the players to watch are reigning national senior champion Iggy Clavecilla, Korean ace Kim Chang Hoi and Yoyong Velez who helped Del Monte clinch a historic victory in the PAL Interclub in March.

Adding to the tough task is the cut-off figure which allows only the top 10 players after tomorrow's second round to continue play for the last two days.

The survivors will join the 131 participants in the various handicap divisions of the tourney which fires off a nationwide tour that will visit seven of the country's most exclusive courses for the regional qualifiers. The winners will advance to the grand finals early next year.

The new season of the Samsung Amateur Tour, co-sponsored by Tokyo Tokyo,Gatorade, Philippine Airlines as the official carrier, Adidas Taylor Made, KZG by Custom Clubmakers, Pink Patio Boracay, Coppertone Sport and Rogin-E, blasts off with an overflow of 158 players competing. Media partners are Killer-Bee, Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT and 103.5 K-Lite.

Samsung Electronics Philippines Inc. Sang Youl Eom was ecstatic over the huge turnout in all classes, saying that it is a manifestation that the Tour's vision of providing a competition of skill for amateurs of all handicap levels is being realized.

Bigger Tour Pilipinas next year

A BIGGER, tougher Air21 Tour Pilipinas next year.

This is the vision of principal bankroller Bert Lina, the Air21 and Tour chair who believes that two successive years of success in staging the annual summer cycling festival are already enough to take the event to loftier heights.

"We will start to include Mindanao and Visayas in our calendar next year. And we have received requests from our friends in the international scene to include them in our race," Lina said during his speech at the close of the 17-stage race at the Quirino grandstand.

And why not?

During the third stage of the Tour, heading toward Tagaytay, veteran Enrique Domingo could only shake his head in amazement.

"The race is surprisingly fast," said Domingo.

The Tour wound up with Rhyan Tanguilig as its star.

Tanguilig, the overall individual champion, was impressed by the way several young riders showed their skills in the race, which was also backed by Isuzu, Gatorade, Red Bull, Summit, Pharex, Lactovitale, Spectrum Communications and Leo Magaway's Elixir bikeshop, the official cycling equipment provider of the race.

So much so that even Tanguilig couldn't speak of his chances of a rare repeat.

"*Ang hirap sabihin. Ang daming malalakas ngayon. Yung mga batang nakasabay ko sa daan, ang lalakas pumadyak, puro may ahon pa*," said the 25-year-old skipper of PLDT.

AGOJO

SUPERAL

Asia-Pacific Jungolf gets going in Jakarta

JAKARTA, Indonesia—Tonton Asistio, Jayvie Agojo and Wolen Superal set out as among the favorites in their respective divisions at the start of the Asia-Pacific Junior Golf Championships at the Damai Indah Golf and Country Club in Bumi Serbong Damai here.

The 14-year-old Asistio is competing in Class B, Agojo (17) is entered in Class A while Superal (11) is seeing action in Class C of the four-division tourney which has attracted 170 players from 11 countries.

Also plunging to action are Gino Bunyi and Aaron Dimabuyu in Class A, brothers Junro and Chris Jordan Mamaril, Crystal Faith Superal, Mikee Camitoc, Adrian Woo, Joaquin Arroyo, Carlos Fabregas and Allan Guy in Class B and James Christian Ricohermoso in Class D for 10 years and under.

Gerry Handog, international events committee head of the Jungolf Foundation of the Philippines, said that all his team members are raring to go.

"We have good chances of winning in all the divisions and I just asked everybody to keep focused," said Handog. "There are a lot of good players in the field, but these kids have trained hard enough to be able to come up with a big challenge."

Meanwhile, the fifth leg of the Samsung Jungolf Circuit is under way at the Tat Filipinas Golf Club and Riviera executive courses in San Pedro, Laguna and Silang, Cavite.

More than 60 players are disputing the various age group titles in the 54-hole tourney also supported by the International Container Terminal Servicers Inc. and PAL

Welcoat seeks outright semis slot versus Blu

STANDINGS	W	L
Viva Mineral Water	7	1
Welcoat Paints	6	1
Sunkist-UST	4	4
Hapee Toothpaste	3	3
Toyota Otis-Letran	3	4
Montaña	2	5
Lee Pipes-Ateneo	2	5
Blu Star	1	5

GAMES TODAY (Pasig Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Montaña vs Hapee
4 p.m.—Blu Star vs Welcoat

By Trina Ibarle

THE WELCOAT Paintmasters are leaving nothing to chance this time.

Lucky to tally an 83-81 victory over Toyota Otis-Letran in their last outing, the Paintmasters are raring to dispose of Blu Star and claim an outright semifinal seat in the 2004 PBL Unity Cup.

The game is set at 4 p.m. today at the Pasig Sports Center with Welcoat, holding a 6-win, 1-loss slate, favored to prevail and join Viva Mineral Water (7-1) in the semis.

Defending champion Hapee Toothpaste (3-3) tries to get its bid going as it tackles Montaña Pawnshop (2-5) in the 2 p.m. encounter.

Toyota-Otis was on the verge of stunning Welcoat until Toyota Otis' Ronjay Enrile committed an unnecessary foul off Paintmaster Dino Aldeguer, who reversed the outcome by sinking the two free throws.

"We were lucky to escape with the victory that time. Now, we're going to make sure," said Caloy Garcia, who'll be banking on Chester Tolomia, Jojo Tangkay and Aldeguer.

The Teeth Sparklers have been on a roller-coaster ride for most of the eliminations with a 3-3 tally and need to win their last four assignments to qualify outright.

Emerson, Oreta, Francis Mercado and rookie Reed Juntilla need to be more consistent for Hapee to prevent a third straight loss.

The Nick Joaquin I know

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

NICK Joaquin would have turned 87 today, May 4, had he not died on April 30. I distinctly remember his age because he and my father were both born in 1917. My father died in 1990.

Nick Joaquin, the National Artist for Literature, had died the way he didn't want it—in his sleep. He was a man always awake: a barfly at night, a writer at dawn, a reader in the morning, a jeepney-hunter in the afternoon, a taxi-rider at midnight. He was Ernest Hemingway's opposite: He loved life so much he'd have wanted to live up to "a hundred and five" as Frank Sinatra, his favorite crooner, sang it. Ernest Hemingway, one of the all-time literary greats, had killed himself by pulling the trigger of a shotgun pointed to his mouth; many believed Hemingway wasn't quite through with writing when he committed suicide.

As reports would have it, the rocking chair in Nick Joaquin's bedroom was where he breathed his last: He was found there unconscious and doctors would later say he died after a cardiac arrest. He was in his rocking chair waiting for the papers he had asked his friend, Jojo, to buy that fateful morning.

It was a death minus frills, drama. Knowing Nick, he would have wanted frills, drama, to attend his death.

Like, before finally writing "30," he'd have wanted maybe to hold court, beer in hand, and dictate what would amount to a "last will and testament." In fact, that was the joke he fired at Billy Lacaba, his confidante, just very recently after learning of Ding Nolledo's death in Los Angeles some weeks back. Ding Nolledo, one of the greatest writers of his generation with whom I had shared a bottle of aged *basi* mano-a-mano before he left for the United States in the '80s, was a dear, dear buddy of Nick's.

The funny thing is, if you don't know Nick that much, you'd think he's serious with every word he says as he rattles off his wishes in a hoax of a "last will and testament." For, in reality, Nick's love for jokes is second only to his love for beer. Make that San Miguel Beer.

I met Nick Joaquin in the '70s through Recah Trinidad. You get introduced to Nick through Recah, you become instant family of Nick. I would soon discover that to virtually all the people that Nick had met through Recah, they became close immediately with Nick. To Nick, all that Recah loved are all worthy of his love, too.

Needless to say, many mornings would soon see me at Nick's house in the company of Recah and, yes, Danny Dalena, Nick's favorite painter whom he christened "Bengengot" mainly because Dalena is hard of hearing on one ear. Many a time that all four of us drank beer till noon at Nick's house in San Juan, with mostly Spanish sardines (Nick's favorite) and Sky Flakes as our *pulutan*. When the drinking would turn out unstoppable even after five past 12 noon, Nick, always in pajamas when at home, would suddenly disappear from our view. I'd soon learn that he had left us for his daily siesta. The session would stop, only to be resumed after a short drive to a joint usually peopled by jeepney drivers, if not thugs.

Not long after, Nick and I would be on a first-name basis. I'd soon discover that among his favorite people other than Recah and Dalena were the late Serafin Lanot, Nena Roco, Greg Brillantes, Virgie Moreno, Mama Oriang Lanot and her daughter (Marra) and son (Xyrus), Pete Lacaba, Tony Lacaba and, yes, Erwin Castillo and Pepito Aguila.

Nick Joaquin loved life very much that he spent nights in noisy spots where the beer he loved to drink straight from the bottle was cold.

But still, at daytime, he was as private and as aloof as a nun. Only those in his "immediately family" can go to his house on mornings. And "immediate family" would include the likes of Recah and Dalena, Greg and Pete.

Nick was the most difficult to grant you an interview. Just as you think he's that close to you already, you'd get a roaring no when you want him interviewed. On a bad day, he could be nasty and would growl at you.

Nick was also the hardest to invite to an occasion. When finally he relented to come to the house for a birthday party, he brought along a *lechon* and French bread. I wasn't even home yet when he arrived. I must now admit he made sure of that. He left before I could arrive. But before leaving, he left me his best-seller "Reportage on Crime." In his dedication, he wrote: "To Al, You think I wrote this book? -Nick."

With Nick, certainty was nonexistent. Are you sure he's dead?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PACQUIAO: Just two pounds over weight limit.

GMA OFFERING

Giant screen available for Manny-Juan fight

By Marc Anthony Reyes

"LET'S unite as one nation behind Manny Pacquiao."

This was the appeal made by President Macapagal Arroyo yesterday as conveyed through Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain.

The PSC chief said Ms Arroyo ordered him to make special preparations at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex which will accommodate fans wanting to watch the one and only Filipino champ go for the WBA and IBF featherweight championships.

"She said the whole nation must come together to pray for Manny, and for once forget about politics to support a common cause," Buhain said.

The President, added Buhain, has called on the nation to watch the fight on television as Pacquiao slugs it out for boxing glory.

Pacquiao, the People's featherweight champ, is set to fight title-holder Juan Manuel Marquez on May 8 (Sunday in Manila) at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Fight day is on the eve of the national elections where President Arroyo is running for another term.

"A victory for Manny is a victory for all sports-loving Filipinos in as much as casting our votes on May 10 is a victory to our country's democracy," said Buhain.

Buhain added that half of the 800 national athletes will be gathered at the RMSC where a giant screen will be put up so they can all "cheer together" for Pacquiao.

Pacquiao became the acknowledged featherweight king of the world after his victory over the legendary Marco Antonio Barrera last Nov. 16 at the Alamodome in Texas.

Pacquiao has been training under the watchful eyes of Freddie Roach in Los Angeles since last month after the fight was scheduled.

For his victory over Barrera, Ms Arroyo gave Pacquiao a P1 million incentive on top of his winnings reportedly amounting to $350,000.

Team Pacquiao nails 1st big point

Fro [illegible]

there have been a last minute change in the original composition of the judges.

He said he would give the complete list of officials once Team Pacquiao, which wound up its schedule at the Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood Sunday, reaches the Las Vegas championship site Monday.

Pacquiao, only two pounds over the featherweight limit, rounded up his training gear with a three-round sparring against a peppery bantamweight. He has totaled 135 rounds of sparring for the Marquez fight against only 102 for the Marco Antonio Barrera bout last year.

The significance of the points scored by Team Pacquiao was hard to determine considering that the judges may not have a say in the fight that could end by stoppage.

But Nazario said they have to be obsessive in guarding against outside forces, recalling an incident last July when Pacquiao was nearly thrown off-balance by allegations he had hepatitis on the eve of his bout against Emmanuel Lucero, whom he stopped [illegible] three rounds.

There were reported efforts by the opposing camp to picture Pacquiao as a dirty fighter.

However, Pacquiao, who continued to draw raves with his splendid form, laughed off the attempted distractions.

With big bets expected to be placed in the run-up to the ti[illegible]ht, Pacquiao yesterday again thanked [illegible] ntrymen and advised oppo[illegible] not [illegible] et carried away.

He [illegible] he [illegible] ld place fun bets at him but [illegible] ld n[illegible] mble.

"*Ayok* [illegible] *l ang* boxing (I don't want to turn box[illegible] to gambling)," he told [illegible]

Samsung meet starts at Southwoods today

FRONTLINERS of Manila Southwoods and Canlubang stable of talents cross paths anew in a championship division showdown that should provide the fireworks to the kick-off leg of the third season of the Samsung Amateur Tour at the Legends course of the Manila Southwoods Golf and Country Club in Carmona, Cavite.

What used to be a simple 36-hole duel has become a full-blown 72-hole battle and the big names in the 27-man roster led by Juvic Pagunsan, Tommy Manotoc, Jay Bayron and Jun Bernis for the Canlubang side and Young Turks like Mike Bibat, Gene Bondoc, Toru Nakajima and club champion Bong Brobio for Southwoods are in for another big challenge.

Also among the players to watch are reigning national senior champion Iggy Clavecilla, Korean ace Kim Chang Hoi and Yoyong Velez who helped Del Monte clinch a historic victory in the PAL Interclub in March.

Adding to the tough task is the cut-off figure which allows only the top 10 playe[illegible] afte[illegible] tomorrow's second round [illegible] ue pl[illegible] fo[illegible] the last two days.

The survivors will join the 131 participants in the various handicap divisions of the tourney which fires off a nationwide tour that will visit seven of the country's most excl[illegible]sive courses for the regional qualifiers. The winners will advance to the grand fina[illegible] [illegible]arly next year.

The new season of the Samsung Amateur Tour, co-sponsored by Tokyo Tokyo, Gatorade, Philippine Airlines as the official carrier, Addas Taylor Made, KZG by Custom Clubmakers, Pink Patio Boracay, Coppertone Sport and Rogin-E, blasts off with an overflow of 158 players competing. Media partn[illegible] are Killer Be[illegible], Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Ma[illegible] [illegible], 99.[illegible] RT and 103.5 K-Lite.

Samsung Electronics Philippines In[illegible] Sa[illegible] Youl Eom was ecstatic over the huge turnout [illegible] all classes, saying that it is a manifestation that the Tour's vision of providing a competition of skill for amateurs of all handicap levels [illegible]

AGOJO

SUPERAL

Asia-Pacific Jungolf gets going in Jakarta

JAKARTA, Indonesia—Tonton Asistio, Jayvie Agojo and Wolen Superal set out as among the favorites in their respective divisions at the start of the Asia-Pacific Junior Golf Championships at the Damai Indah Golf and Country Club in Bumi Serbong Damai here.

The 14-year-old Asistio is competing in Class B, Agojo (17) is entered in Class A while Superal (11) is seeing action in Class C of the four-division tourney which has attracted 170 players from 11 countries.

Also plunging to action are Gino Bunyi and Aaron Dimabuyu in Class A, brothers Junro and Chris Jordan Mamaril, Crystal Faith Superal, Mikee Camitoc, Adrian Woo, Joaquin Arroyo, Carlos Fabregas and Allan Guy in Class B and James Christian Ricohermoso in Class D for 10 years and under.

Gerry Handog, international events committee head of the Jungolf Foundation of the Philippines, said that all his team members are raring to go.

"We have good chances of winning in all the divisions and I just asked everybody to keep focused," said Handog. "There are a lot of good players in the field, but these kids have trained hard enough to be able to come up with a big challenge."

Meanwhile, the fifth leg of the Samsung Jungolf Circuit is under way at the Tat Filipinas Golf Club and Riviera executive courses in San Pedro, Laguna and Silang, Cavite.

More than 60 players are disputing the various age group titles in the 54-hole tourney also supported by the International Container Terminal Servicers Inc. and PAL.

Welcoat seeks outright semis slot versus Blu

STANDINGS	W	L
[illegible] Mineral Water	[illegible]	[illegible]
Welcoat Paints	[illegible]	[illegible]
Sunkist-UST	4	[illegible]
Hapee Toothpaste	[illegible]	[illegible]
Toyota Otis-Letran	[illegible]	4
Montaña	[illegible]	5
Lee Pipes-Atene	[illegible]	5
Blu Star	[illegible]	[illegible]

GAMES TODAY (Pasig Sports Center)

[illegible]

By Trina Ibarle

THE WEL[illegible] AT [illegible] ea [illegible] time [illegible]

Lu[illegible] ally [illegible] 81 victory over Toyota Otis-Le[illegible] [illegible] the Paintmaster are [illegible] of Blu Star and claim an outright sem[illegible] in the 2004 PBL Unity Cup.

The [illegible] at 4 p.m. today at the Pasig Sports C[illegible] h Welcoat holding a 6-win [illegible] Vis Mineral Wat[illegible] n the semi[illegible]

Defen[illegible] [illegible] n Hapee Toothpaste [illegible] get [illegible] going as it tackles Montaña [illegible] shop [illegible] the 2 p.m. encounter.

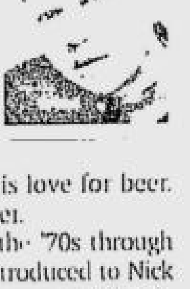
To[illegible] was [illegible] verge of stunnin[illegible] Welc[illegible] Toy[illegible] Ronjay Enrile con[illegible] Paintmaste[illegible] Dino Mac[illegible] outcome [illegible] sinkin[illegible]

"We [illegible] ah the victor[illegible] that [illegible] make [illegible] said [illegible] Chester Tolo[illegible] Macguer[illegible]

The Teeth Spa[illegible] a roller coaster ride for [illegible] tions with a 3-[illegible] tally and [illegible] four [illegible] signments to qualify [illegible]

Emerson Oreta, Franc[illegible] Mer[illegible] and rook[illegible] Reed Juntilla need to [illegible] more [illegible] sistent for Hapee to pr[illegible]

The Nick Joaquin I know



SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

NICK Joaquin would have turned 87 today, May 4, had he not died on April 30. I distinctly remember his age because he and my father were both born in 1917. My father died in 1990.

Nick Joaquin, the National Artist for Literature, had died the way he didn't want it—[illegible] his sleep. He was a man always awake: a barfly at night, a writer at dawn, a reader in the morning, a jeepney-hunter in the afternoon, a taxi-rider at midnight. He was Ernest Hemingway's opposite: He loved life so much he'd have wanted to live up to "a hundred and five" as Frank Sinatra, his favorite crooner, sang it. Ernest Hemingway, one of the all time literary greats, had killed himself by pulling the trigger of a shotgun pointed to his mouth; many believed Hemingway wasn't quite through with writing when he committed suicide.

As reports would have it, the rocking chair in Nick Joaquin's bedroom was where he breathed his last: He was found there unconscious and doctors would later say he died after a cardiac arrest. He was in his rocking chair waiting for the papers he had asked his friend, Jojo, to buy that fateful morning.

It was a death minus frills, drama. Knowing Nick, he would have wanted frills, drama, to attend his death.

Like, before finally writing "30," he'd have wanted maybe to hold court, beer in hand, and dictate what would amount to a "last will and testament." In fact, that was the joke he fired at Billy Lacaba, his confidante, just very recently after learning of Ding Nolledo's death in Los Angeles some weeks back. Ding Nolledo, one of the greatest writers of his generation with whom I had shared a bottle of aged *basi* mano-a-mano before he left for the United States in the '80s, was a dear, dear buddy of Nick's.

The funny thing is, if you don't know Nick that much, you'd think he's serious with every word he says as he rattles off his wishes in a hoax of a "last will and testament." For, in reality, Nick's love for jokes is second only to his love for beer. Make that San Miguel Beer.

I met Nick Joaquin in the '70s through Recah Trinidad. You get introduced to Nick through Recah, you become instant family of Nick. I would soon discover that to virtually all the people that Nick had met through Recah, they became close immediately with Nick. To Nick, all that Recah loved are all worthy of his love, too.

Needless to say, many mornings would soon see me at Nick's house in the company of Recah and, yes, Danny Dalena, Nick's favorite painter whom he christened "Bengengo" mainly because Dalena is hard of hearing on one ear. Many a time that all four of us drank beer till noon at Nick's house in San Juan with mostly Spanish sardines (Nick's favorite) and Sky Flakes as our *pulutan*. When the drinking would turn out unstoppable even after five past 12 noon, Nick, always in pajamas when at home, would suddenly disappear from our view. I'd soon learn that he had left us for his daily siesta. The session would stop, only to be resumed after a short drive to a joint usually peopled by jeepney drivers, if not thugs.

Not long after, Nick and I would be on a first-name basis. I'd soon discover that among his favorite people other than Recah and Dalena were the late Serafin Lanot, Nena Roco, Greg Brillantes, Virgie Moreno, Mama Oniang Lanot and her daughter (Marra) and son (Xyrus), Pete Lacaba, Tony Lacaba and, yes, Erwin Castillo and Pepito Aguila.

Nick Joaquin loved life very much that he spent nights in noisy spots where the beer he loved to drink straight from the bottle [illegible]

But still at [illegible] time he was as private and as aloof [illegible] nun. Only those [illegible] his "immediate" family can go to h[illegible] on mo[illegible] And immediate [illegible] would [illegible] the likes of Recah, Dalena, Gre[illegible] and Pete [illegible]

Nick was [illegible] he mos[illegible] di[illegible] you ar[illegible] [illegible] that [illegible] ady [illegible] want [illegible] viewer[illegible] On [illegible] ay [illegible] and we[illegible] at yo[illegible]

Nick wa[illegible] hardest [illegible] occasion. Whe[illegible] ial [illegible] h[illegible] relented to co[illegible] birthday party, he brou[illegible] along [illegible] and French bread. I was even home [illegible] when he arrived. I must no[illegible] admit [illegible] made [illegible] of that. He left before could [illegible] But befor[illegible] left [illegible] the best seller "Report [illegible] In dedication he wrot[illegible] You [illegible] wrote this book. Nick.

With Nic[illegible] certa[illegible] w[illegible] exist[illegible] Are yo[illegible] he [illegible]

GARNETT (left) with teammate Sam Cassell AP

Kevin Garnett captures MVP award

MINNEAPOLIS—Minnesota's Kevin Garnett has won his first Most Valuable Player award, sources told The Associated Press on Sunday.

The Timberwolves said there would be a major announcement regarding Garnett on Monday at Target Center. Two team officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Garnett would receive the NBA's MVP award.

Players and coaches were unavailable for comment when word of Garnett's honor came, but it was not a surprise considering the season he had. Writers and broadcasters from each NBA market vote on the award, and ballots are due before the playoffs begin.

"That's just a formality," coach Flip Saunders said earlier this week. "I don't think there's much drama. It's pretty much signed, sealed and delivered. It's probably on a UPS truck coming up here right now."

San Antonio's Tim Duncan, who won the last two MVPs, and Indiana's Jermaine O'Neal were likely Garnett's closest competitors this season. But the 27-year-old forward, a seven-time All-Star, made his ninth NBA season his best yet.

Leading Minnesota to a 58-24 record and the top seed in the West, Garnett averaged 24.2 points and led the league with 13.9 rebounds. He also joined Larry Bird as the only players to average at least 20 points, 10 rebounds and five assists for five consecutive years.

Garnett, who established 11 single-season franchise records in 2003-04, has avoided much talk of individual awards and kept his focus on winning a championship.

"Anything that comes with that would be great," he said earlier. "It's a team game."

The Timberwolves host the Sacramento Kings in Game 1 of their Western Conference semifinal series on Tuesday.

Minnesota beat the Denver Nuggets in five games to end a league-record streak of seven straight first-round exits. *AP*

SPORTSWATCH

Limbang leads Nilo Verona honorees

PATRICK John Limbang earned the Nilo Verona Award in honor of the late multi-titled basketball coach during the recent awarding ceremonies of the first Milo Best Center classes for San Beda and Jose Rizal University at the World Trade Center. Limbang attended level 4 session at San Beda. Twenty-six other youngsters received awards from Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain and Best Center founder and president Nicanor F. Jorge Jr. These are: Robert Estanislao, Mon Vincent Derpo, Mark Andro Rodriguez, Kurt Manansala, Franco Mosco and Lorenz Albert Liggayu, best in level 1; John Christopher Salonga, Estanislao, Derpo, Emer Glen Valencia, Martin Tioseco, Jerome Tirona, Jermaine Lamitoc and Jaypee Manansala, most improved in level 1; Kevin Jumbo Manalo, Paolo Teodie Salas, Rommel Madrid and Mark Maranon, best in freethrow, level 2; Nicolo Mercado, Dean Jan Ferdinand Hilario, Albert Alexis Mandigma, Anthony Andrew Mandigma and Jan Michael Zapata, best in layup; Joanna Celine Ragasa and Aaron Vijandre, best in jump shot; and Paul Pangilinan, best defensive man.

Huge field joins World Athletics Day

HUNDREDS of tracksters aged 16 to 17 from Metro Manila schools are expected to take part in the IAAF-sponsored World Athletics Day starting at 2 p.m. tomorrow at the Rizal track oval. Fourteen events—seven each in the boys' and girls' sectors—are at stake in the tournament. All IAAF-member countries around the world will likewise stage the same competition on May 8 and 9. Athletics chief Go Teng Kok said the International Association of Athletics Federation has initiated this simultaneous worldwide youth program to encourage the youth to exploit their potential in the sport. "This is an annual celebration in athletics that leads to the world youth championships. Every year, outstanding youths between 16 and 17 who are products of the World Athletics Day program are sent abroad to take part in the world championships," said Go. UAAP schools, led by powerhouse La Salle, Ateneo, FEU and UST, are expected to compete against their counterparts in the NCAA like Mapua, Letran, San Sebastian College and San Beda.

Pasay entry tops age-group triathlon

DANAO CITY, Cebu—Sean Lim of Pasay City ruled the opening leg of the 2004 National Age-Group Triathlon (NAGT) here yesterday. Lim posted the event's best time of 1 hour, 14 minutes and 57 seconds in winning the age-group 20-24 title. He also earned 100 points for the series. Lim, a former member of the Philippine Triathlon Team, was followed by 25-29 champion Edwin "Johnny" Angelo (Cebu City) with 1:18:00 for 80 points, while 15-19 champion Gerrie Calinawan (RP Team Cebu City) placed third with a time of 1:21:43, good for 70 points. In the distaff side of the event sponsored by Speedo, Gatorade, Danao Telecom, City Government of Danao, Reliv Philippines, Danao City Sports Commission, Philippine Sports Commission and the POC Sports For All Commission, Iloilo City's Alexandra Ganzon had an easy victory in the 750-m swim, 20-km bike, 5-km run event, timing 1:29:42 for the 15-19 title and earning 100 points. A distant second was Lapu-lapu City's Angel Oracion who won the female 30-over title with 1:51:42. Bacolod City's Jane Morre (female 20-29 champion) timed 1:59:14 for third.

NCA 7-cock tilt today at Big Dome

BIG-TIME cockers collide in the National Cockers Association (NCA) 7-Cock Derby beginning at 5 p.m. today at the Araneta Coliseum. A total of 56 fights are on tap. Hosts are Max Roxas of Tarlac, former World Slasher Cup champion Dicky Lim of Batangas and NCA. Slated today is the 3-cock elimination round while the championship is on Thursday, May 6. The Mulawin A Jimafer entry of Rep. Rudy Albano emerged as solo champion in the NCA 7-Cock Derby held last April 20 and 22. Meanwhile, partners Johan Capinpin, Pol Estrellado and Boy Royo are all set to host another 7-cock derby on May 18 and 20. Interested parties may contact 911-3101 and 911-2928 (look for Gloria Avena).

Chess circuit opening leg set May 15-21

THE PHILIPPINE Chess Aficionados and Masters Association, a newly formed nationwide organization of titled and untitled chess players, has launched its program of high-level tournaments starting with the first leg on May 15-21. PCAMA president Quirino Sagario said the tournament, which offers a minimum pot of P50,000, will be rated by the International Chess Federation (Fide) and will be run under the long-game format of two hours. Sagario said the return to the long format will give Filipino chess players the chance to attune their playing styles to international formats. Registration is ongoing at the PCAMA office at the 24th floor, Pacific Star Bldg., Sen. Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave. during office hours (9 a.m. to 7 p.m.). Deadline for submission of entries is May 14 at 7 p.m.

Venus notches 11th straight victory

WARSAW, Poland—Second-seeded Venus Williams won her second straight WTA tournament when she beat fourth-seeded Svetlana Kuznetsova, 6-1, 6-4, in the J&S Cup final on Sunday. The 57-minute victory was her 11th consecutive win, following her title run in Charleston, South Carolina, and two wins in the United States' victory over Slovenia in the Fed Cup. The run represents her longest-winning streak since she won 19 straight matches during the 2002 American hardcourt season. "My win in Charleston was great for me, but it was so important for me to follow it up this week. I was playing strong and playing better each match," Williams said. The triumph was especially satisfying for Williams—who was watched by her mother Oracene, sporting a cast on a broken wrist—because it was in the Warsaw final a year ago that a stomach muscle injury forced her to retire in the third set. *AP*

AC Milan booters rule Italian League

PARIS—AC Milan won the Italian league title for the 17th time on Sunday after beating Roma, 1-0, in a violence-marred contest at the San Siro as reigning Spanish champions Real Madrid's grip on their crown loosened badly when it went down, 2-0, at Deportivo La Coruna the previous day. The defeat left second-placed Roma nine points behind with two games left to play in this season's Series A. Ukrainian striker Andrei Shevchenko scored the winner in the second minute to hand Milan their first title since 1999. Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti paid tribute to his players, who trailed Roma by six points before the winter break. "Today, we played fantastic and overall we deserved the Scudetto," he added. "It was an extraordinary season and I am truly happy." The destination of the Spanish championship is in the hands of Valencia after they opened up a four-point lead at the top of the Spanish first division with a 2-0 win over Real Betis on Sunday. *AFP*

Yankees tally 6th consecutive triumph

NEW YORK—Mike Mussina pitched seven innings, Hideki Matsui hit a go-ahead single and the New York Yankees won their sixth straight game Sunday with a 4-2 victory over the Kansas City Royals. The Yankees completed a three-game sweep of the Royals, who have dropped four in a row and 14 of 17. Joe Torre got his 800th win as Yankee manager. Mussina (2-4) gave up two runs, but did not allow a hit after the fourth inning. Mariano Rivera got his ninth save in nine chances. "With a pitcher like Mussina, if you've got him set up for the knockout punch, you'd better deliver it," said Mike Sweeney, who drove in both runs for the Royals. Jorge Posada scored in the seventh inning on the single by Matsui, who later came home on Ruben Sierra's sacrifice fly to complete the scoring. Jason Giambi homered off Jeremy Affeldt (0-3) for his fifth this season. In St. Petersburg, Florida, Rocco Baldelli hit a two-run homer and Mark Hendrickson pitched six solid innings, helping Tampa Bay snap a six-game losing streak, 8-2. *AP*

Spurs draw 1st blood

Hornets force Game 7

SAN ANTONIO—The San Antonio Spurs forced the Lakers into 10 fourth-quarter turnovers and held Los Angeles without a field goal for a six-minute span, using a late 10-0 run to cement an 88-78 victory Sunday in Game 1 of their second-round series.

"We tried to force-feed Shaq (Shaquille O'Neal), and they got four or five turnovers out of that that helped them get back into the game," Lakers coach Phil Jackson said. "By and large, we were victims of our own inability to execute."

The Lakers succeeded in getting Tim Duncan out of the paint, but he still scored 12 of his 30 points in the fourth quarter to help the Spurs overcome their 9-for-21 freethrow shooting. The win was the Spurs' 16th straight since late March.

"There's not a whole lot of secrets about what we do and what they do," Duncan said. "It's about going out there and imposing your will."

Game 2 in the best-of-seven series is Wednesday.

Duncan drew double-teams almost every time he got the ball in the second half, causing him trouble both posting up and driving. So he moved his game outside, hitting three straight jumpers late in the fourth quarter as part of the 10-0 run.

The spurt ended with a dunk by Manu Ginobili off a pass from Duncan, putting the Spurs ahead, 83-71.

San Antonio limited the Lakers to only 13 points in the fourth quarter.

Tony Parker added 20 points and nine assists for San Antonio, while Ginobili had 11.

Kobe Bryant led the Lakers with 31 points, 18 of them in the second half. O'Neal scored 19 points and had a game-high 13 rebounds, and Karl Malone scored 10.

"They did what they wanted to do and then later they had a big spurt in them and we didn't," Bryant said. "They wanted to get into transition and run it, and that's what they did."

In New Orleans, Baron Davis had 15 points and 12 assists, while defensive specialists George Lynch and P.J. Brown each scored 16 points as the New Orleans Hornets beat the Miami Heat, 89-83.

The series, tied 3-3, concludes Tuesday in Miami. The host team has won each game so far, and Miami has a 15-game home unbeaten streak. In NBA history, the team with home-court advantage has won its Game 7 on 70 of 85 occasions.

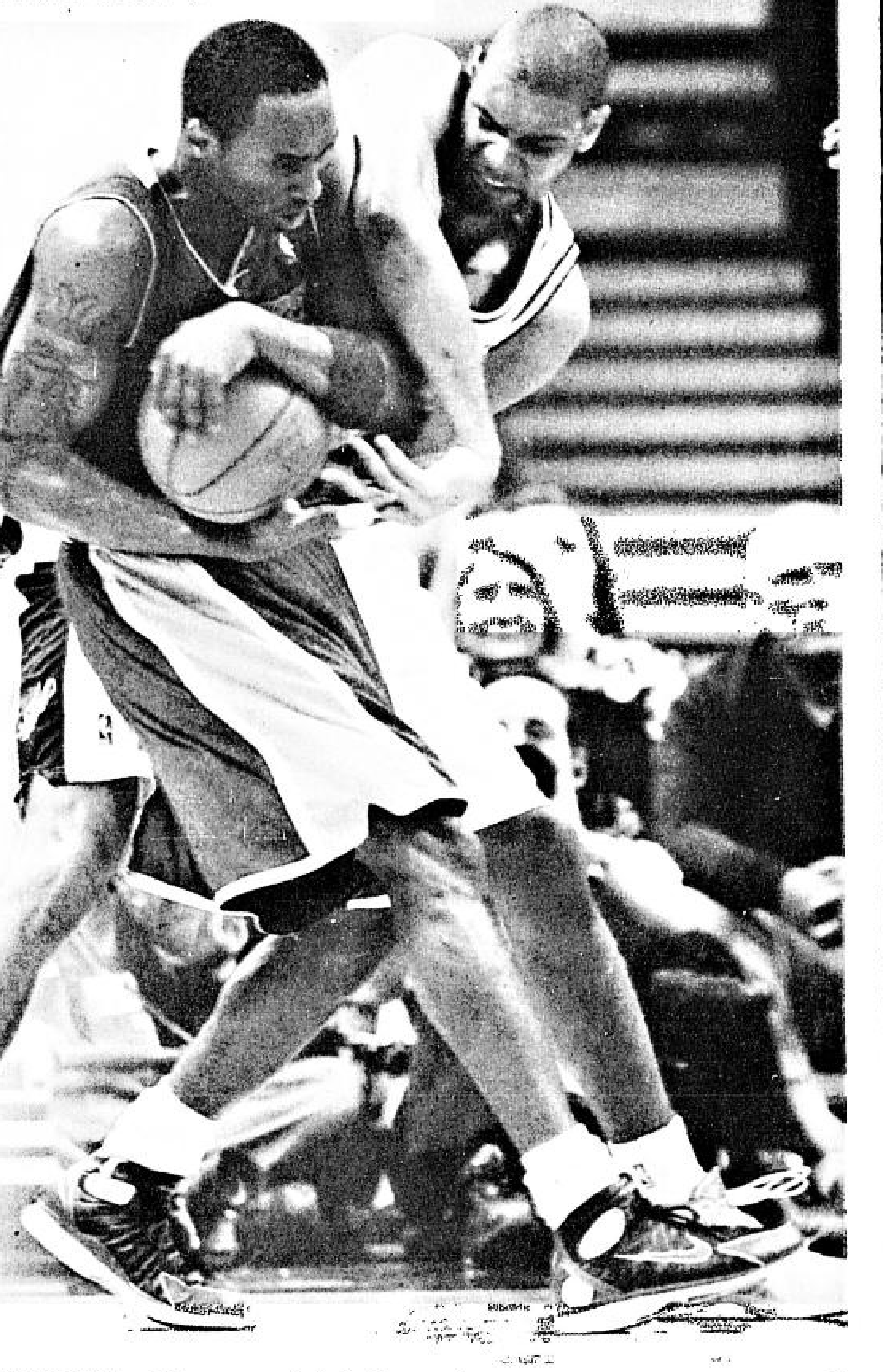
"It's going to be a war, just like every other game in this series. It might be a little more intense," Miami guard Dwyane Wade said. "It's a great series—two great teams going at it. That's what you watch the playoffs for, to see who's going to duke it out in Game 7."

Jamaal Magloire tied his series high with 14 points and David Wesley added 10 as all five starters reached double figures.

Wade scored 27, including 10 in the final period, to lead Miami, which trailed by 18 points with eight minutes left but got as close as 85-81 on a runner by Caron Butler with 1:07 left.

Eddie Jones had 23 points, shooting 9-of-10 from the freethrow line, and Butler finished with 14.

Lamar Odom had a poor game, fouling out with 2:20 left after scoring only nine points. *AP*



BRYANT (left) and Duncan wrestle for ball possession. AFP

'Smarty' sets sight on Preakness

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky—Kentucky Derby winner Smarty Jones licked up his tub of feed, smacked around a net full of hay, looked "great" on Sunday, and is likely headed to the Preakness in two weeks.

The first undefeated Derby winner since Seattle Slew in 1977 was scheduled to be shipped to Philadelphia Park on Monday or Tuesday to resume training for the second leg of the Triple Crown.

The trip to Pimlico would be a few days before the May 15 race.

Derby runner-up Lion Heart will be there to have another try at the speedy Smarty Jones, with other Derby horses Limehouse, The Cliff's Edge and Borrego also being considered.

Limehouse, trained by Todd Pletcher, was fourth; The Cliff's Edge, trained by Nick Zito, was fifth, and Borrego was 10th.

Also expected for the 1 3/16ths-mile Preakness at Pimlico are Eddington and Rock Hard Ten, a pair of colts who did not have enough graded stakes earnings to run in the Derby, Cheiron and Water Cannon.

Cheiron is trained by 21-year-old Kristin Mulhall, who sent out Imperialism to a third-place finish in the Derby.

John Servis, who trains Smarty Jones, said his little red colt "ate really good last night, played with the hay net and that's how he's come out of the earlier races.

"I couldn't ask to see him any brighter than he was this morning," he added.

Smarty Jones and Lion Heart turned what was supposed to be a wide-open Derby into a two-horse race. *AP*

MICKELSON hits his third shot on the 18th hole during the third round. AFP

Mickelson just 2 shots off

NEW ORLEANS—Phil Mickelson, playing in his first tournament since winning the Masters, moved into position to make it two in a row on Sunday at the HP Classic.

Mickelson shot a 69 in the third round to move into a tie for second with Charles Howell III, two strokes behind leader Joe Ogilvie.

Ogilvie shot a 66 on Sunday for a 17-under 199.

The final round was pushed back to Monday because of rain delays in the first two rounds.

Mickelson began the day in a six-way tie for third at 12-under, and moved to 14-under on the front nine before a bogey on No. 9.

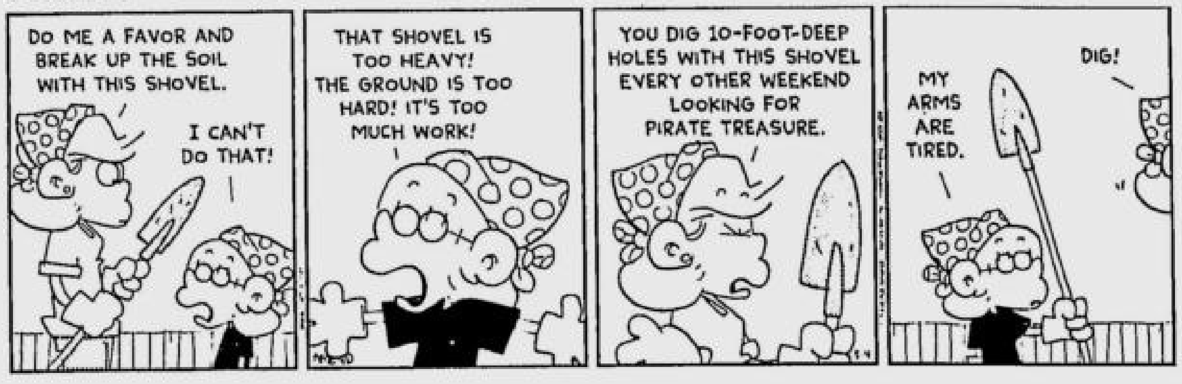
He offset that miscue with birdies on 11, 14 and 15, to move within a stroke of Ogilvie. But a bogey on 18 dropped him two off the lead and left him at 15-under 201.

Second-round leader Danny Ellis shot an 10-over 82 to fall way off the pace after opening rounds of 63 and 66. He was at 5-under.

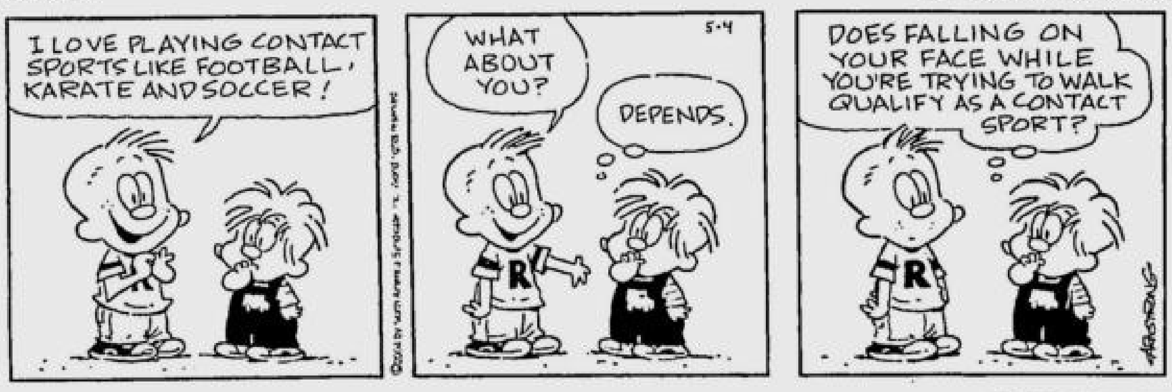
Howell shot a 1-under 71 in the harsher conditions on Sunday after rounds of 66 and 64.

In Hoover, Alabama, Bruce Fleisher shot a 4-under 68 and coasted to a seven-stroke victory at the Bruno's Memorial Classic, the largest winning margin in tournament history. *AP*

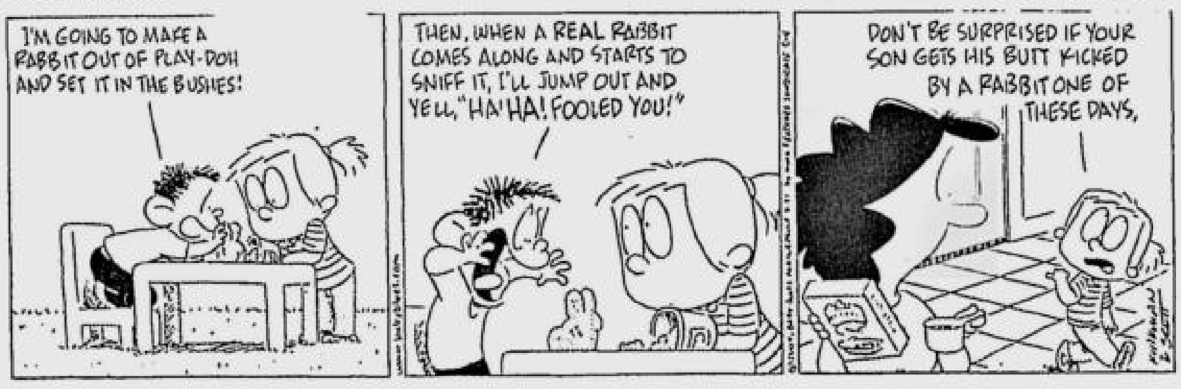
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


DO ME A FAVOR AND BREAK UP THE SOIL WITH THIS SHOVEL.
I CAN'T DO THAT!
THAT SHOVEL IS TOO HEAVY! THE GROUND IS TOO HARD! IT'S TOO MUCH WORK!
YOU DIG 10-FOOT-DEEP HOLES WITH THIS SHOVEL EVERY OTHER WEEKEND LOOKING FOR PIRATE TREASURE.
MY ARMS ARE TIRED.
DIG!

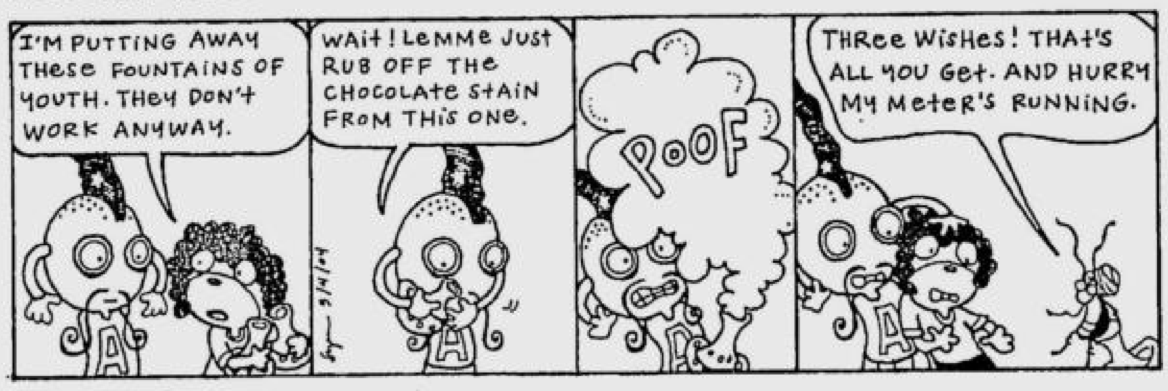
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I LOVE PLAYING CONTACT SPORTS LIKE FOOTBALL, KARATE AND SOCCER!
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
DEPENDS.
DOES FALLING ON YOUR FACE WHILE YOU'RE TRYING TO WALK QUALIFY AS A CONTACT SPORT?
5-4
ARMSTRONG

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


I'M GOING TO MAKE A RABBIT OUT OF PLAY-DOH AND SET IT IN THE BUSHES!
THEN, WHEN A REAL RABBIT COMES ALONG AND STARTS TO SNIFF IT, I'LL JUMP OUT AND YELL, "HA! HA! FOOLED YOU!"
DON'T BE SURPRISED IF YOUR SON GETS HIS BUTT KICKED BY A RABBIT ONE OF THESE DAYS.

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I'M PUTTING AWAY THESE FOUNTAINS OF YOUTH. THEY DON'T WORK ANYWAY.
WAIT! LEMME JUST RUB OFF THE CHOCOLATE STAIN FROM THIS ONE.
POOF
THREE WISHES! THAT'S ALL YOU GET. AND HURRY MY METER'S RUNNING.
5/4/04

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are compassionate and warmhearted. You have a strong nurturing instinct combined with a deep inner strength. People trust you. Ironically, despite your stable exterior, you often take great risks at some point in your life. (You are not always what you seem to be.) The year ahead favors marriage, partnerships and fun social activity.

Birthdate of: Ana Gasteyer, comic actress; Audrey Hepburn, actress; Randy Travis, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a powerful Full Moon day! Your persuasive skills are very strong. Be gentle when you try to make your point about any particular subject.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Today's Full Moon opposes your sign. This makes you intense about issues—particularly matters dealing with shared possessions and joint responsibilities. Have patience.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Conversations will be lively ! However, as the saying goes, "Two heads are better than one." Someone might help you make improvements in your life.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might meet someone who has a powerful effect on you today. Possibly, you are the person who has this effect on someone else. Either way, it's memorable!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You have the opportunity to sway or influence young minds today. This is not a casual thing. Ironically, this puts the onus of responsibility on you. (Be wise and compassionate.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a marvelous day to dream up ways to make improvements to whatever you own. Get rid of what is no longer needed; fix up what you want to keep.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): In discussions with others today, you want to dig to the bottom of something. You want the juicy dirt. (Gossip?) You want to know the truth!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a wonderful day to do research at work. You have the energy, the concentration and the determination to go after whatever you're looking for.

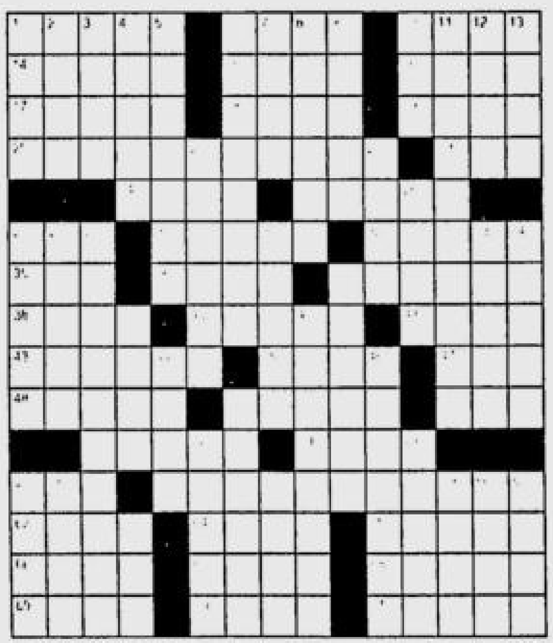
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Today you're attracted to all kinds of mysteries! You might want to spend the day reading a whodunit or horror story, or seeing that kind of movie.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is a good day to look at your inner self and try to understand yourself better. Memories from your childhood occur to you now. However, you now see them with the eyes of an adult.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You have the mind of a sleuth today! You want to investigate everything. You certainly want to get to the bottom of something. (And you'll do it.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Think about how you can improve your possessions, your financial picture and your general security. Make repairs to what you own. Draw up a budget. Get a clear picture of your assets.

DAILY CROSSWORD

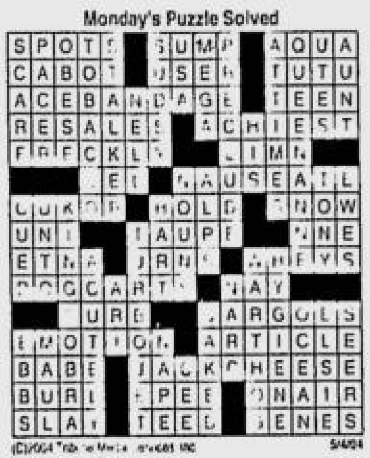


By Nellie G. Becker
Leesburg, GA
5/4/04

ACROSS
1 Welsh dog
6 Get along
10 Quickly, please!
14 Ger. submarine
15 Scrooge, casually
16 Hankering
17 Zodiac sign
18 Ticklish Muppet
19 Eternal City
20 Annual golf pro-am site
23 Just out
24 Window ledge
25 Stage
27 Emb. leader
30 Out of order
32 Indy winner Bobby
35 Fauna display
36 Cozy retreat
37 Pastry palace
38 Track tipster
40 Poetic match
42 Tolkien's trees
43 Burstyn and DeGeneres
45 Actor Wyle
47 Graphic lead-in?
48 Personnel subgroup
49 Fifty minutes past
50 Building wing
51 Manicurist's board
53 Vision opener?
55 Glass container
57 Presley's genre
62 Language of Pakistan
64 Diving bird
65 Zhou ___
66 Wet expanses
67 "Damn Yankees" vamp
68 Stiff
69 Bring to heel
70 Judah's son
71 Chicago tower

DOWN
1 Robert of "I Spy"
2 NYC theatrical award
3 Pitcher Nen
4 Attires
5 Venetian or Florentine
6 Somewhat weak
7 Ready and willing partner
8 Changes the charts
9 "__ Arden"
10 Put on TV
11 Salisbury Plain sight
12 Highest point
13 I'm glad that's over!
21 Fudd and Gantry
22 ___-kiri
26 Japanese drink
27 Earlier Central American
28 Dinero
29 A.k.a. Hoover
31 "Funny Girl" composer
33 Soviet collective
34 Trademark cleaner
37 Defeated
39 Prison time
41 Helena woman
44 __-do-well
46 Gripping devices
49 Magnate
52 Psychologist May
54 Banks or Els
55 Fair and square
56 Land measure
58 Tropical nut tree
59 Gymnast Korbut
60 Animal's den
61 Kettle covers
63 Manipulate

Monday's Puzzle Solved



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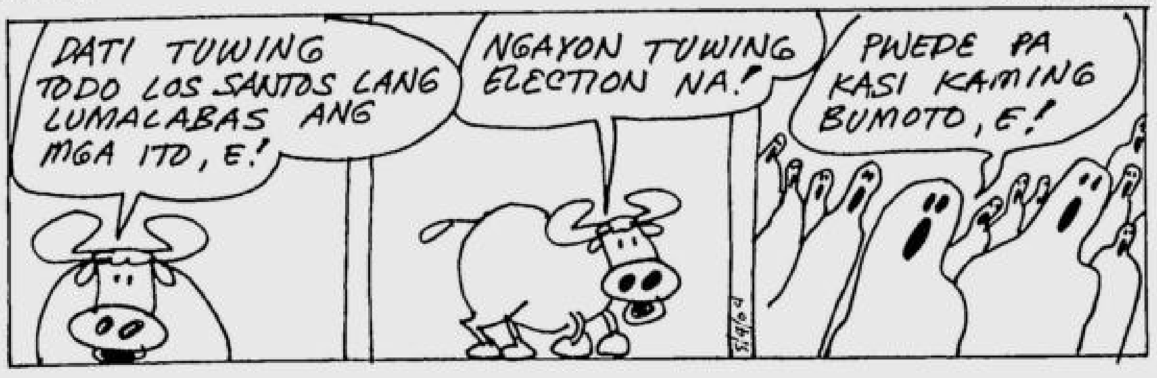
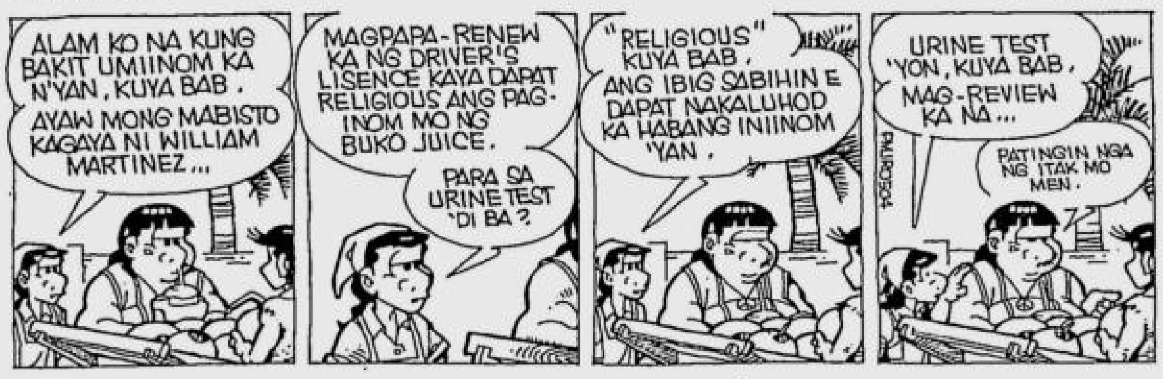
5/4/04

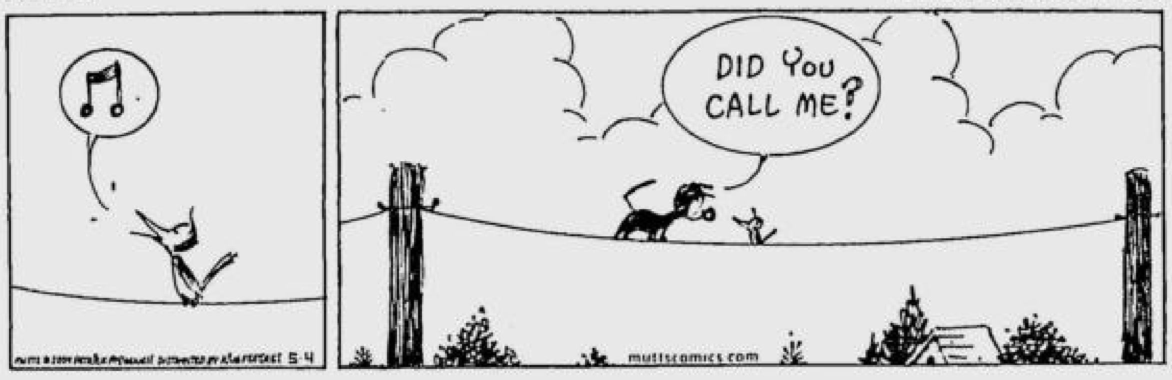
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


DATI TUWING TODO LOS SANTOS LANG LUMALABAS ANG MGA ITO, E!
NGAYON TUWING ELECTION NA!
PWEDE PA KASI KAMING BUMOTO, E!
5/4/04

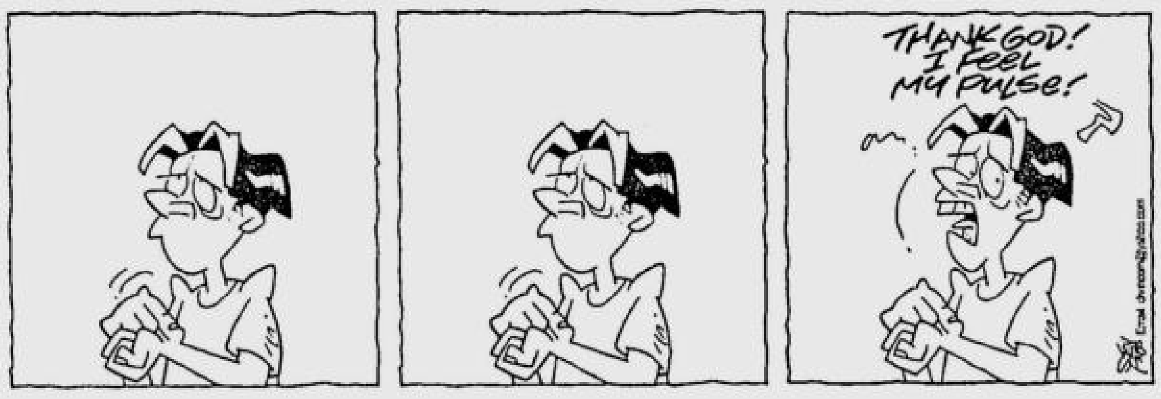
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


ALAM KO NA KUNG BAKIT UMIINOM KA N'YAN, KUYA BAB. AYAW MONG MABISTO KAGAYA NI WILLIAM MARTINEZ...
MAGPAPA-RENEW KA NG DRIVER'S LISENCE KAYA DAPAT RELIGIOUS ANG PAG-INOM MO NG BUKO JUICE.
PARA SA URINE TEST 'DI BA?
"RELIGIOUS" KUYA BAB, ANG IBIG SABIHIN E DAPAT NAKALUHOD KA HABANG INIINOM 'YAN.
URINE TEST 'YON, KUYA BAB, MAG-REVIEW KA NA...
PATINGIN NGA NG ITAK MO MEN.

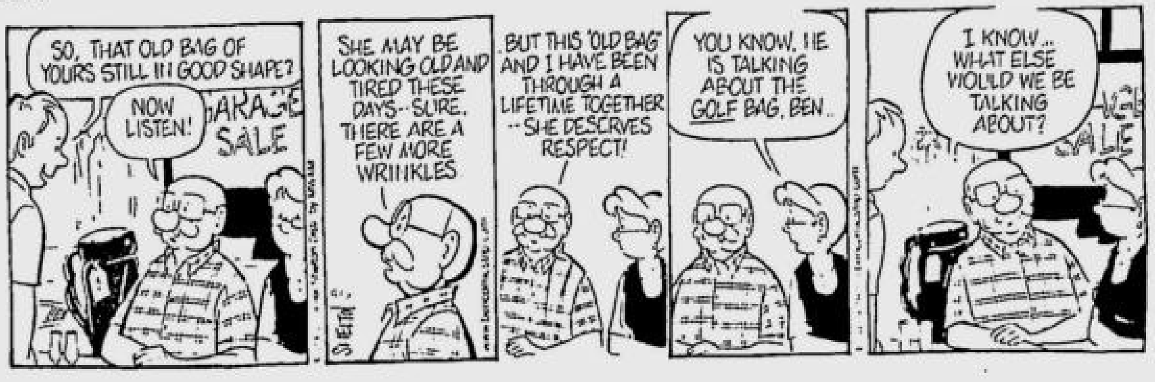
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


DID YOU CALL ME?
5-4
muttscomics.com

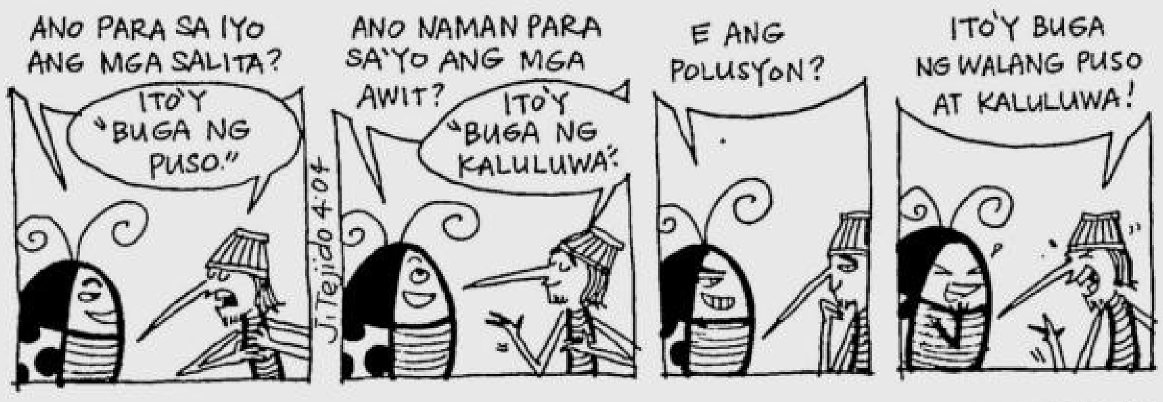
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


THANK GOD! I FEEL MY PULSE!

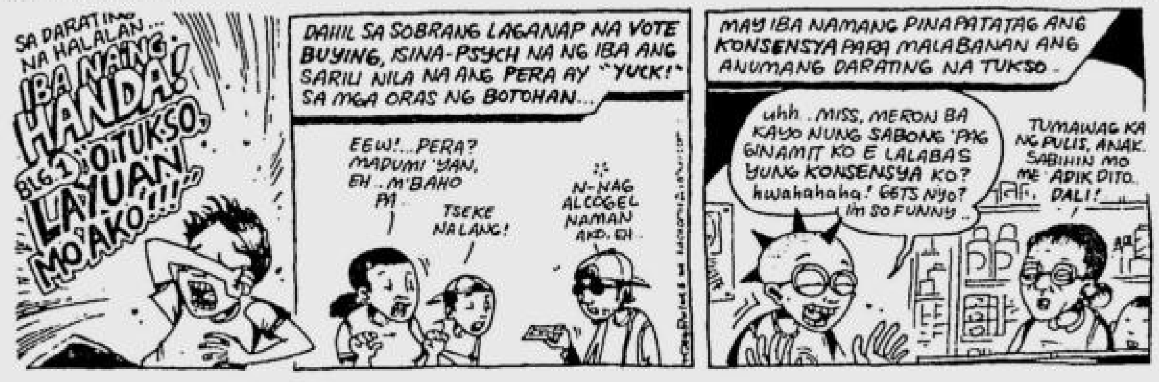
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


SO, THAT OLD BAG OF YOURS STILL IN GOOD SHAPE?
NOW LISTEN!
GARAGE SALE
SHE MAY BE LOOKING OLD AND TIRED THESE DAYS-- SURE, THERE ARE A FEW MORE WRINKLES
BUT THIS 'OLD BAG' AND I HAVE BEEN THROUGH A LIFETIME TOGETHER -- SHE DESERVES RESPECT!
YOU KNOW, HE IS TALKING ABOUT THE GOLF BAG, BEN.
I KNOW... WHAT ELSE WOULD WE BE TALKING ABOUT?
SALE
SHELTON

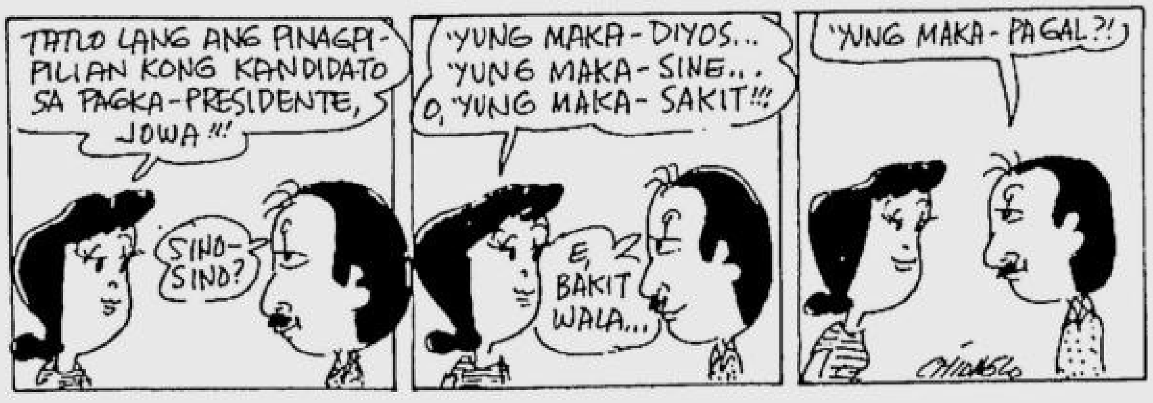
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANO PARA SA IYO ANG MGA SALITA?
ITO'Y "BUGA NG PUSO."
ANO NAMAN PARA SA'YO ANG MGA AWIT?
ITO'Y "BUGA NG KALULUWA."
J. Tejido 4.04
E ANG POLUSYON?
ITO'Y BUGA NG WALANG PUSO AT KALULUWA!

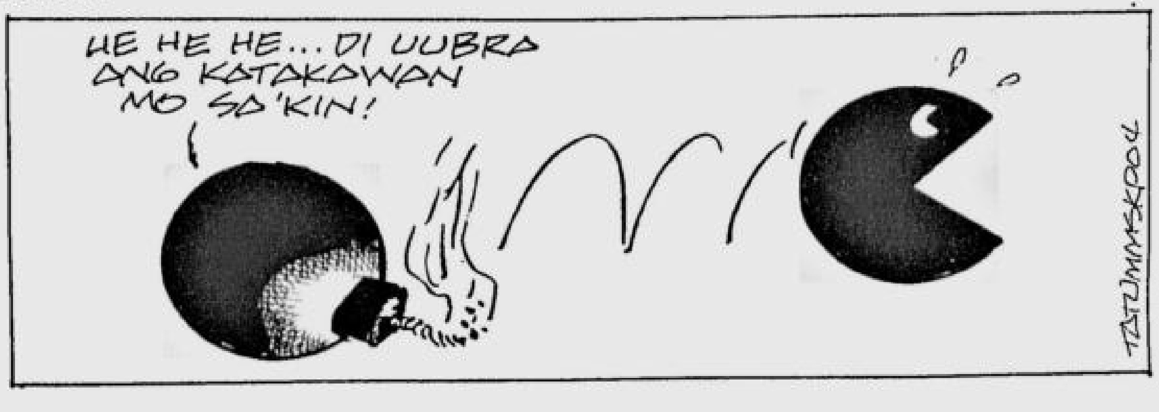
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


SA DARATING NA HALALAN... IBA NA ANG HANDA!
BLG. 1 O! TUKSO, LAYUAN MO AKO!!!
DAHIL SA SOBRANG LAGANAP NA VOTE BUYING, ISINA-PSYCH NA NG IBA ANG SARILI NILA NA ANG PERA AY "YUCK!" SA MGA ORAS NG BOTOHAN...
EEW!...PERA? MADUMI 'YAN, EH.. M'BAHO PA.
TSEKE NA LANG!
N-NAG ALCOGEL NAMAN AKO, EH.
MAY IBA NAMANG PINAPATATAG ANG KONSENSYA PARA MALABANAN ANG ANUMANG DARATING NA TUKSO.
uhh.. MISS, MERON BA KAYO NUNG SABONG 'PAG GINAMIT KO E LALABAS YUNG KONSENSYA KO? hwahahaha! GETS NYO? Im SO FUNNY..
TUMAWAG KA NG PULIS, ANAK. SABIHIN MO ME ADIK DITO. DALI!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


TATLO LANG ANG PINAGPIPILIAN KONG KANDIDATO SA PAGKA-PRESIDENTE, JOWA!!!
SINO-SINO?
'YUNG MAKA-DIYOS... 'YUNG MAKA-SINE... O, 'YUNG MAKA-SAKIT!!!
E, BAKIT WALA...
'YUNG MAKA-PAGAL?!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


HE HE HE... DI UUBRA ANG KATAKAWAN MO SA'KIN!

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie 833-9999

NOW SHOWING

Central

SM MEGAMALL
6331901

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 PAYCHECK
3 STARSKY & HUTCH
4 MAN ON FIRE
5 A WHOLE 10 YARDS
6 50 FIRST DATES
7 HAUNTED SPIRIT
8 BOOBITA ROSE
9 SCHOOL OF ROCK
10 HELLBOY
11 TAKING LIVES
12 ANIMAL

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1 PAYCHECK
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
3 SPARTAN
4 STARSKY & HUTCH
5 MAN ON FIRE
6 HELLBOY
7 SCHOOL OF ROCK
8 PETER PAN
9 BOOBITA ROSE
10 HAUNTED SPIRIT
11 A WHOLE 10 YARDS
12 ANIMAL

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1 MAN ON FIRE
2 STARSKY & HUTCH
3 TAKING LIVES
4 HELLBOY
5 PETER PAN
6 PAYCHECK
7 ACACIA
8 SCHOOL OF ROCK
9 BOOBITA ROSE
10 HAUNTED SIPIRIT
11 A WHOLE 10 YARDS
12 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1 PETER PAN
2 SCHOOL OF ROCK
3 BOOBITA ROSE
4 HELLBOY
5 PAYCHECK
6 WHOLE TEN YARDS
7 STARSKY & HUTCH
8 MAN ON FIRE

SM CITY STA. MESA
7149522 • 7161416

1 MAN ON FIRE
2 PAYCHECK
3 HELLBOY
4 ANIMAL
5 STARSKY & HUTCH
6 TAKING LIVES
7 SCHOOL OF ROCK
8 BOOBITA ROSE
9 A WHOLE 10 YARDS
10 PETER PAN

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1 HELLBOY
2 MAN ON FIRE
3 STARSKY & HUTCH
4 ANIMAL

North

SM CITY MARILAO
(044) 933 2013 to 17

1 HELLBOY
2 TAKING LIVES
3 THE CURSE
4 STARSKY & HUTCH

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1 PETER PAN
2 HELLBOY
3 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
4 CHECK INN
5 BOOBITA ROSE
6 STARSKY & HUTCH

SM CITY BAGUIO
(074) 4464505

1 HELLBOY
2 TAKING LIVES
3 GRUDGE 2
4 PAYCHECK

South

SM CITY LAS PIÑAS
8066686

1 HELLBOY
2 SCHOOL OF ROCK
3 STARSKY & HUTCH
4 A WHOLE 10 YARDS
5 PAYCHECK
6 SPARTAN
7 HAUNTED SPIRIT
8 MAN ON FIRE
9 BOOBITA ROSE
10 ANIMAL

SM CITY BICUTAN
7763055

1 STARSKY & HUTCH
2 MAN ON FIRE
3 A WHOLE 10 YARDS
4 HELLBOY

SM SUPER CENTER SUCAT
8294975

1 SCHOOL OF ROCK
2 MAN ON FIRE
3 STARSKY & HUTCH
4 HELLBOY

SM CITY BACOOR
(046)4173868

1 A WHOLE 10 YARDS
2 SCHOOL OF ROCK
3 MAN ON FIRE
4 HAUNTED SPIRIT
5 HELLBOY
6 STARSKY & HUTCH
7 ANIMAL
8 BOOBITA ROSE

SM CITY LUCENA
(042) 7100977-80

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2 THE CURSE
3 GRUDGE 2
4 PAYCHECK

Visayas & Mindanao

SM CITY CEBU
(032) 2313876

1 TAKING LIVES
2 50 FIRST DATES
3 PETER PAN
4 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
5 DRAGON VS. NINJA
6 CHECK INN
7 BOOBITA ROSE
8 PAYCHECK

SM CITY ILOILO
(033) 3209422

1 SORUM
2 RESERVED
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
5 PETER PAN
6 PAYCHECK
7 RESERVED
8 GRUDGE 2

SM CITY DAVAO
(082) 2976998

1 PETER PAN
2 HOUSE OF THE DEAD
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 DEATH CURSE
5 TAKING LIVES
6 PAYCHECK

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
(088) 8592884

1 PETER PAN
2 ACACIA
3 PASSION OF THE CHRIST
4 PAYCHECK

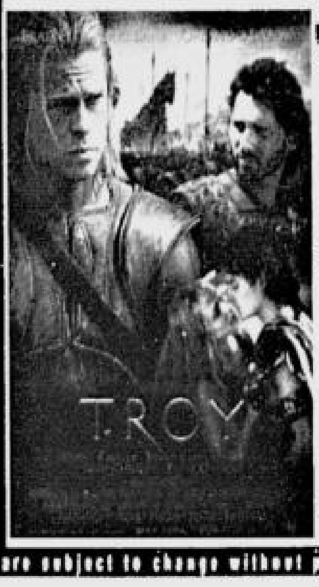
THE PODIUM CINEMA

1
MAN ON FIRE
11:40 FS/12:05
MF/2:45/5:30/8:15/10:405
LFS/11:00 LMF/1:25 END

2
STARSKY & HUTCH
11:40 FS/12:10
MF/2:20/4:30/6:40/8:50/
10:30 LFS/11:00
LMF/12:40 END

For Seat Reservation, call 633 8976
LATE NIGHT SCREENING
DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS

SM CINEMA



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A NATION WILL
BURN TO THE GROUND

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:: guaranteed seats available at
Megamall | Manila | Sta. Mesa | Fairview | Southma
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PHOTO EXHIBIT

Don't miss the chance to see the scenes from the movie TROY in a photo exhibit to be held at the SM Megamall Cinema lobby starting May 2.

regular showing | may 13 2004
at the SM Cinema.
Subject to MTRCB Rating.

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

Michelangelo musical premieres at Music Museum

SHOW TIME

FOR the first time in Philippine theater, a Filipino tackles a global and timeless subject, Michelangelo Buonarotti and the Italian renaissance when "Il Divino" (The Divine), a new musical work by Freddie Santos, premieres at the Music Museum on May 6, 7 and 8.

In the radical and brave new work, Santos teams up with award-winning composer Von de Guzman ("Mano Po") to create a production that explores the scandals, the struggles and the triumphs of the most colorful time in world history, as seen through the eyes of its most turbulent artists.

"Il Divino" combines the elements of musical comedy, political commentary, high drama, sacred cantata, MTV and documentary. Although Michelangelo's life occurred more than 400 years ago, its elements of political intrigue, sexual scandal, religious controversy and leadership failure make it as relevant as today's headlines.

Portraying Michelangelo—ironically the only non-singing role in the entire musical—are Audie Gemora ("Joseph the Dreamer," "The Last Five Years") and Jaime del Mundo ("Art," "Mr. Noah's Big Boat").

Playing the role of the radical poetess Victoria Colonna is Pinky Marquez ("Rama at Sita," "Magnificat").

"Il Divino" is made possible with an artistic grant from the PLDT Foundation and with major sponsorship from the Music Museum, JT Stage, Patrick Uy, Avon, Megaworld and Smart.

Play dates are on May 6, 7 and 8, at 8 p.m., with 3 p.m. matinees on May 7 and 8.

Ticket reservations and discounted block sales are available at the Music Museum box office (721-6726).

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING
EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DTS) TAKING LIVES
2 (SDDS) HELLBOY
3 DTS PAY CHECK
4 GOLD (DTS) PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5 GOLD (DOLBY) WHOLE 10 YARD
6 GOLD (SDDS) STARSKY & HUTCH
7 GOLD (DOLBY) MAN OF FIRE
8 (SDDS) BOOBITA ROSE
9 (SDDS) SCHOOL OF ROCK
10 (SDDS) PETER PAN

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72

1 DOLBY HELLBO
2 DOLBY MAN OF FIRE
3 DOLBY STARSKY & HUTCH
4 DOLBY SCHOOL OF ROC

Masagana CINEMA
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1 ANIMAL
2 STARSKY & HUTCH
3 HELLBOY

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE
3 STARSKY & HUTC
MAN OF FIRE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) ANIMAL
5

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1 MAN OF FIRE
2 ANIMA
3 STARSKY & HUTC
4 HELLBO
5 WHOLE 10 YARD
6 SCHOOL OF ROCK

M star
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(Las Pinas)
tel 873.5004

1 ANIMAL
2 ACACIA

PREMIERE CINEMA
(Makati City) tel 892.2503
THX

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 BOOBITA ROSE
2 PASSION OF THE CHRIST

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1
2
3
4

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

RESERVE
5
6
7 (DTS)
8 (SDDS)
9 DOLBY

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1 CLOSE FOR RENOVATIO
2 CLOSE FOR RENOVATIO
3 CLOSE FOR RENOVATIO
4 (SDDS) HELLBOY
5 STARSKY & HUTCH
6 (DOLBY) ANIMAL
7 (DTS) MAN OF FIRE
8 CHECK INN
9 BOOBITA ROSE

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

RESERVE
1
2 (SDDS)
3 (DTS)
4 DOLBY
5

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1 MAN OF FIRE
2 SPARTAN
3 (DTS) WHOLE 10 YARD
4 ANIMAL
5 HELLBO

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1 RESERVE

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson CARMEN
Lords DOUBLE SEDUCCTIO

Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 MAN ON FIRE
2 STARSKY & HUTCH
3 ANIMAL
4 RESERVE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY) WHOLE 10 YARD
2 MAN ON FIRE
3 ANIMAL
4 STARSKY & HUTCH
5 HELLBO

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 ANIMAL
2 TORQUE

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center
Ali MALL CINEPLEX 7
Tel No. 911-3101 Loc. 821-[illegible]

1 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL) MAN OF FIRE
4 (SDDS) STARSKY & HUTCH
5 (DTS) WHOLE 10 YARD
6 HELLBOY
7 SCHOOL OF ROCK

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY) HELLBO
2 ACACIA
3 (DTS) PETER PAN
4 STARSKY & HUTC

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121

1 STARSKY & HUTCH
2 HELLBO
3 (DOLBY) PETER PAN
4 BOOBITA ROSE

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489

1 PASSION OF THE CHRIS
2 BOOBITA ROSE
3 (DOLBY) REPLICATE
4 EMPERORS CLUB

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926

1 STARSKY & HUTC
2 ANIMA
3 (DTS) HELLBO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 MAN OF FIRE
2 DTS STARSKY & HUTC
3 DOLBY HELLBO
4 UNINVITE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1 STARSKY & HUTC
2 (DOLBY) HELLBO
3 (DTS) MAN OF FIR
4 UNINVITE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel (045) 9821727

1 BOOBITA ROS
2 PASSION OF CHRIS
3 (DOLBY) UNINVITE

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 BOOBITA ROS
2 HELLBO
3 (DOLBY) BONE SNATCHER
4 (DTS) PASSION OF CHRIS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795-3320

1 PETER PA
2 TAKING LIVE
3 HELLBO

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS) HIGHWAY MI
2 ANIMA
3 TEENAGE SEDUCTIO
4 (DTS) LOVE KITA BILIB KA P

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY) HELLBO
2 ANIMA
3 (DTS) MAN OF FI
4 UNINVITE
5 STARSKY & HUTC

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1 ANIMA
2 MAN OF FI

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558

1 STARSKY & HUT
2 MAN OF FI
3 ANIMA

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1 PASSION OF CHRI
2 BOOBITA RO
3 (DTS) BONE SNATCHE
4 (DOLBY) CHECK - I

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel 520.8914

1 (DTS) RESER

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 CHECK - IN
2 HELLBO
3 TWISTE
4 PASSION OF CHRI

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1 ANIMA
2 VIRGIN PEOPL

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS

FESTIVAL CINEMA
Level 4
Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang
Tel. 85035-71 to 72
Schedule subject to change without prior notice

SCOOBY-DOO 2
MONSTERS UNLEASHED
NOW SHOWING

Acoustic music with Tuck & Patti

ACOUSTIC music, nostalgia and romance combine when two of the finest exponents of acoustic music and jazz, Tuck & Patti, perform on May 21 and 22 at the Meralco Theater.

Husband and wife Tuck Andress and Patti Cathcart have garnered praise and acclaim as musicians and performers, with their original heart-tugging love songs, including their popular revivals "Time After Time," "Can't Help Falling in Love," "Up on the Roof," "Lovin' You," "I Was Born to Love You," "Close to You" and "A Song for You."

The Meralco Theater concert is their first-ever performance in the Philippines.

"It is an honor and a challenge to do a song that has been performed by many other people," Patti says of their revivals. "It keeps you honest. Whenever I do this, I am aware of a whole procession of great artists before me, allowing me to join in being a part of a tradition."

Tuck and Patti met in a band audition in San Francisco in 1978. "Patti came to audition for the band I was in," recalls Tuck. "Within a few seconds of hearing her sing, I knew that I had found my musical soul mate."

Patti adds, "It was immediate for me, too. I instantly knew that the band wasn't happening, but that I was going to steal the guy playing the guitar in the corner."

They compared notes and discovered that they knew hundreds of songs in common and figured that they could get work immediately as a duo. Soon enough, they were working on great projects all the time.

Tuck's guitar virtuosity thrust him into the limelight while Patti's soulful voice and amazing ability to turn it into a percussion instrument has made her distinct among female artists.

The Tuck & Patti show at the Meralco Theater on May 21 and 22 at 8:00 p.m. is produced by Artistation Inc. and presented by Globe Platinum, Petron Blaze, Northwest Airlines. It is supported in part by MTV Phils. and Rhythms@Joey 92.3.

Tickets are available at SM Ticketnet, 911-5555, for P2,000, P1,500 and P1,000, or call Artistation Inc., 884-2183 or 750-0350.

DID YOU KNOW...

Cheska Diaz was seen hanging out with her boyfriend, UAAP player **Doug Kramer**, at Greenbelt 3 in Makati City, last Sunday, which seems to contradict rumors that she is romantically involved with senatorial bet and former VRB chair **Bong Revilla**, who is married to **Lani Mercado**, with whom he has six kids.

'ABS CBN not happy with Arneli'

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

ACCORDING to an ABS-CBN insider, "MTB Ang Saya Saya" people are not too "*saya saya*" about **Arnel Ignacio**'s performance in the noontime show.

Arnel, according to the source, has not been that effective as a daily host the way he was in his former once-a-week stint on GMA 7's "P1M Videoke Challenge." His jokes are said to be more of the "singalong-master" type and don't really click on TV.

Maybe Arneli should just stick to what he does best. Or is he stuck with his two-year ABS contract and he doesn't have a choice but to fulfill his job description?

'Starstruck' trauma

THE DISMAYED mother of one of the eliminated hopefuls on GMA 7's "Starstruck Kids" has been badgering GMA Artist Center everyday. She claims that her kid is suffering a severe trauma after being booted out of the contest.

Her concern as a mother is valid, but letting her kid join the talent search in the first place was a risk in itself. No matter how parents want to protect their kids from the pain of rejection, it is an inevitable fact of life. Maybe GMA 7 should conduct seminars for the parents of the Starstruck Kids to help them soften the blow of rejection for their kids. But some kids are more emotionally and mentally equipped to handle defeat than others. A parent can only do so much.

As a single parent, I often ask myself if I'm doing too much or too little. There are some things that our kids have to learn on their own especially those who will be thrust into the cruel world of show biz.

Robin's Manila Bay plan

BROTHERS **Robin** and **Rommel Padilla** are planning to put up a floating bar in Manila Bay which they will call "Grandma."

Binoe is now busy shooting "Kulimlim" with **Tanya Garcia**. I is Viva's entry to the Manila film fest. Knowing how the publicity machinery in Pinoy show biz works, it will be no surprise if Binoe gets linked to Tanya eventually. Unless they come up with something more substantial. By now the public is already immune to talks about Binoe's legendary womanizing. What else is new?

Oyo as Nadine's producer

OYO Boy Sotto is bent on producing a movie for his girlfriend **Nadine Samonte** and himself. He must really love her so much that he feels she is worth his full emotional and financial investment.

Nadine may not have been lucky in "Starstruck" but it looks like she has hit the jackpot by making Oyo lovestruck. Hopefully, the young Sotto will concentrate on producing for now. Getting Nadine to "reproduce" can wait.

Zsa Zsa & Karylle's album

PRETTY **Karylle** told me that recording an album with her equally beautiful mother, **Zsa Zsa Padilla**, will be a dream come true for her.

"We just have to look for the perfect material and maybe it will happen when I am ripe for it already," said Karylle.

She has a very cool relationship with her mom. "We are like *barkada*," she said. "Sometimes I forget she's my mom *pala*."

She said her love life is nil at the moment, by choice and not by circumstance. Zsa truly raised her daughter well. Karylle is no typical boisterous "kikay" teenager. Her refined nature makes her stand out in a business where everybody seems to be desperately seeking attention.

Is he, isn't he?

Guess who this politico is who is being constantly ribbed by his colleagues to give them a "gadget we all can't live without" because he is said to be the current boy toy of another politico whose election campaign ad focuses on the certain gadget. But politico #1 merely flashes an enigmatic smile when he is teased. It remains to be seen if he will give in to the requests for the gadget. Maybe it will depend on whether his alleged paramour will get elected or ejected on May 10.

Lolit's wards

ISN'T it strange that after **Rosanna Roces** lambasted Flawless, which she used to endorse, **Lorna Tolentino** is now the new image model of the skin care center?

Both Osang and LT are wards of **Lolit Solis**. If there's any iota of truth to Osang's allegations against Flawless, then Lolit would not have allowed LT to endorse Flawless in the first place.

Fireworks & memories

I HAD a blast as a judge in Enchanted Kingdom's fireworks competition during the theme park's recent ninth anniversary. Kudos to the staff and management of E.K., especially Mr. and Mrs. Mario Mamon and Tiny Garner for a successful celebration.

My mom was one of the judges last year so I could not help but get misty-eyed as I watched the awesome fireworks display because it felt like it was my mom lighting up the sky. One of her last bonding moments with the rest of the family was when we all spent one whole Sunday at E.K. Every time I'm there I feel my ma's presence even more.

Personal

I HAVE always been apolitical but I'd like to wish my dear friend, vice mayor (and an attorney, too) **Joey Baluyot** all the luck in his bid to be the next mayor of Concepcion, Tarlac. His track record speaks for itself. In my book, you will always be a winner.

For feedback, e-mail friends_elpueblo@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com

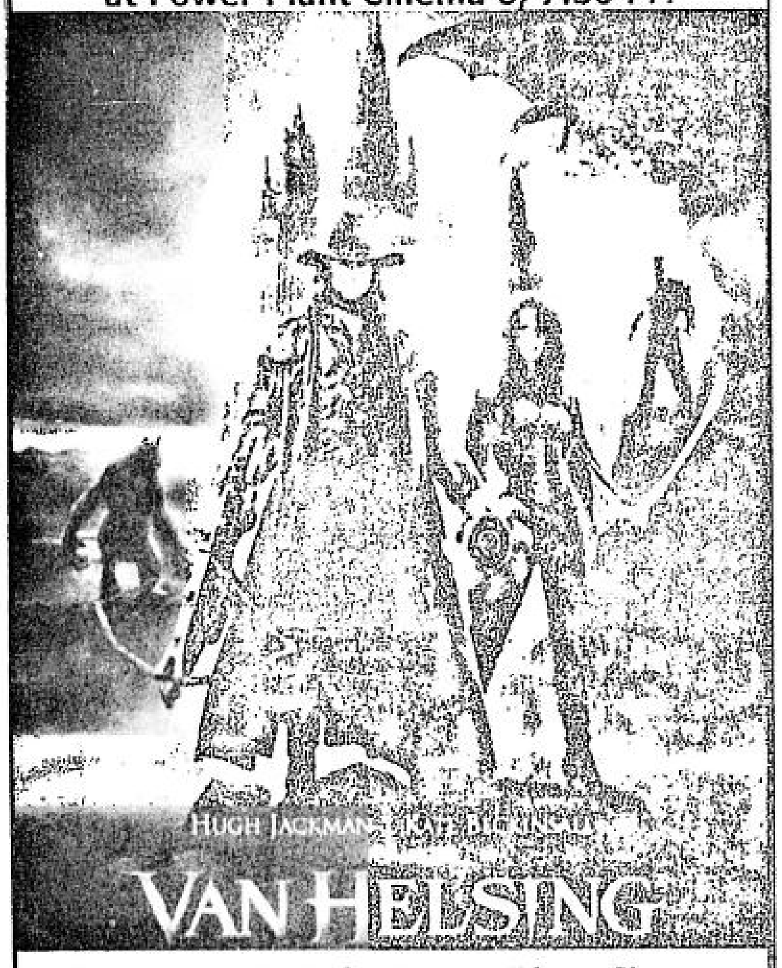
IGNACIO. 'MTB Ang Saya Saya' people are not too '*saya saya*' about Arnel's performance.

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

WHOLE TEN YARDS R13 1:20, 3:25, 5:30, 7:35, 9:40	SCHOOL OF ROCK PG13 12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:10, 9:30	STARSKY AND HUTCH PG13 1:30, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30
MAN OF FIRE R18 12:55, 4:00, 7:05, 10:20	HELLBOY PG13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00	STARSKY AND HUTCH PG13 1:30, 3:15

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

Invitational advance screening tonight at Power Plant Cinema 6, 7:30 PM



Opens May 5 at the Power Plant Cinema

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E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
For inquiries, call:
687-6963 • 687-6972
RESERVED SEATING
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	HELLBOY 11:50, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30 PG-13
2	STARSKY & HUTCH 11:40, 1:50, 4:00 6:10, 8:20, 10:30 PG-13
3	MAN ON FIRE 11:00, 1:55, 4:55 7:55, 10:00 R-18
4	SCHOOL OF ROCK 12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40 PG-13

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CINEMA 2	STARSKY & HUTCH 10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00 P13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.
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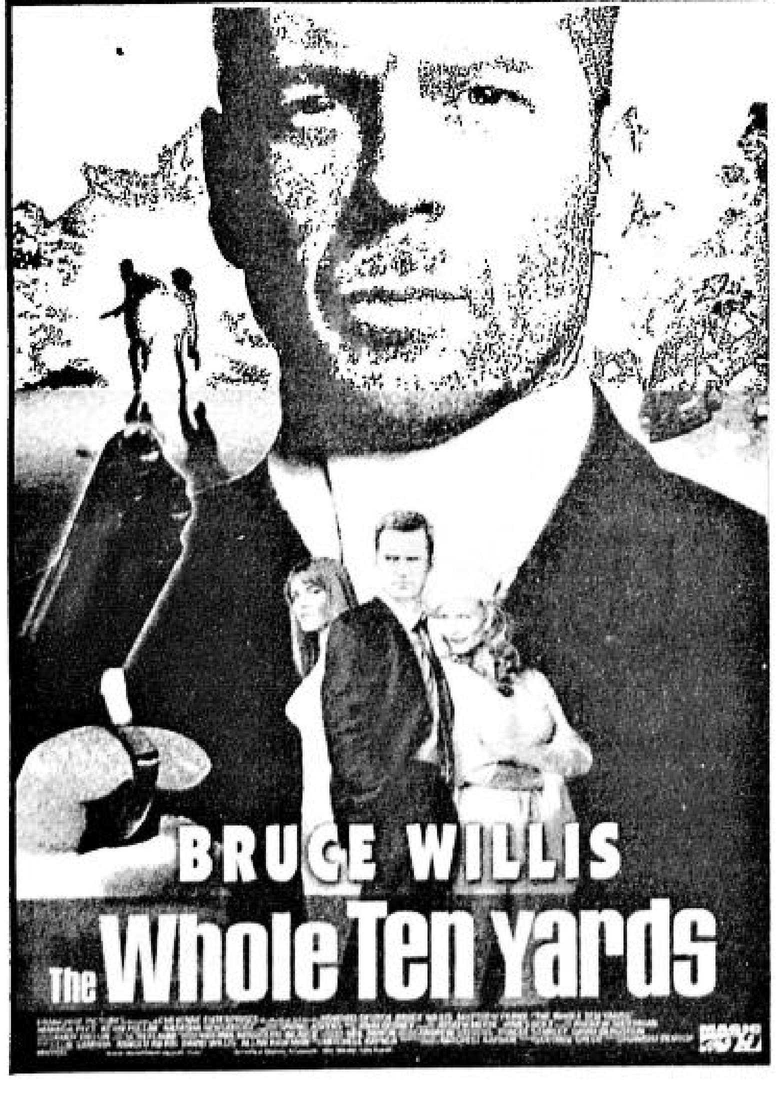
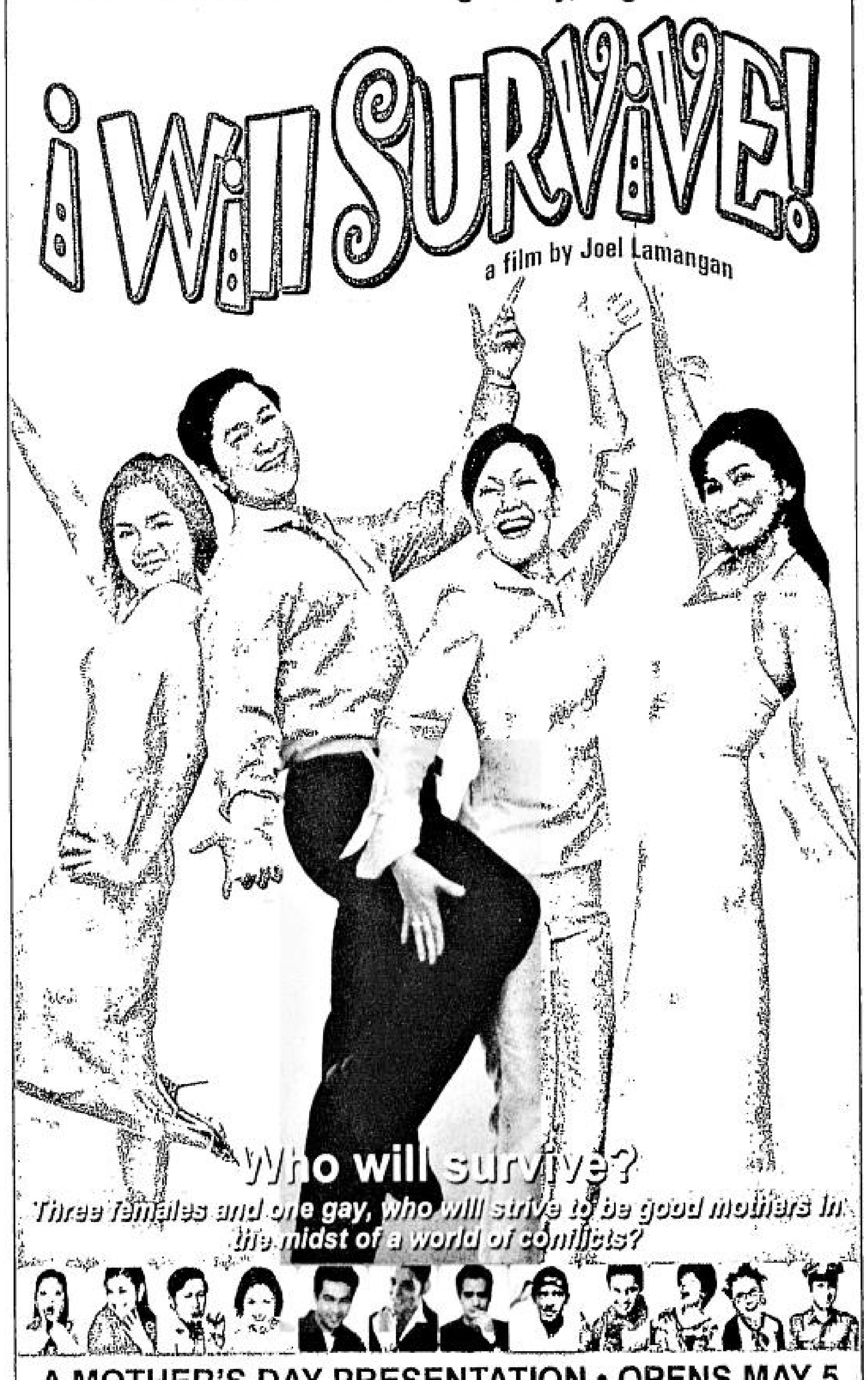


MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
For a sneak preview of our trailer, log on to www.regal-iwillsurvive.com
Who will survive? Sa drama ng buhay, ang maasar talo!


i Will SURViVE!
a film by Joel Lamangan
Who will survive?
Three females and one gay, who will strive to be good mothers in the midst of a world of conflicts?

A MOTHER'S DAY PRESENTATION • OPENS MAY 5
A REGAL ENTERTAINMENT INC. PRESENTATION

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	ANIMAL
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	ANIMAL
B	CLOSED
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
CINEMA-2	ANIMAL
CINEMA-3	SPARTAN
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	DEATH CURSE
CINEMA-6	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
CINEMA-7	CHECK INN
CINEMA-8	ACACIA
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	HELLBOY
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	STARSKY & HUTCH
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SCHOOL OF ROCK
CINEMA-12	WHOLE 10 YARDS
CINEMA-14	MAN ON FIRE
CINEMA-15	TAKING LIVES
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	PASSION OF THE CHRIST
CINEMA-1	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
CINEMA-2	BUTTERFLY EFFECTS
CINEMA-4	[illegible]
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

Local child performers' innate weaknesses

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WE'VE just finished holding an acting workshop for children aged 6 to 14. The 25 kids in the workshop worked long and hard to come up with a 40-minute performance showcase that delighted their parents.

It was heartening to see so many children and their parents willing and even eager to give up part of the summer break to focus on the performing arts. Even better, half of the class turned out to be talented in singing, acting and dancing, or various combinations thereof.

Once again, we found proof that Filipino talents are outstanding, particularly in the musical-theater mode. Thus, productions in this country are well advised to underscore this preference, both on the part of their performers and their audience.

On the other hand, the workshop also brought out some of the innate weaknesses on the local performing scene that we must be aware of and address, if we want our child performers to truly develop their skills:

First, quite a number of the young talents were of the "*gaya-gaya, puto-maya*" sort, little performers who copied the appearance and singing and dancing styles of popular foreign or local artists.

This is a limited view of the true possibilities of performance, and inhibits young talents from developing into original artists who have something distinct to communicate and share.

Only later in the workshop did the young students realize that they had to stand on their own as performers. When they were able to comprehend this, their performances were fresher and more unique, as their participation in the workshop's final showcase indicated.

Some young talents didn't do as well as the others because they didn't have the *hilig*, or enthusiasm for performance, that the thespic arts need. They felt they had to be "persuaded" to perform, and thus their work was weak and strained.

If parents want their kids to become performers, they have to motivate them to want it themselves. If a child really loves performing, it will show in his portrayal, and his audience will love him for it.

How do you encourage a child to enjoy performing? He must never be forced to sing, dance or declaim in front of relatives or guests. He should be exposed to good performances, so that he can see for himself how exciting the thespic arts can be.

And he should be put in workshops and small productions where he can learn the right skills and, above all, the right attitude needed for outstanding work in the performing arts.

In addition, young talents should be trained to work hard, and not to play during rehearsals. They should eventually understand that the "fun" of performance is different from the fun they get from playing.

It is the result of knowing that you have performed well, and have delighted or moved your audience.

New fitness video

JACKIE Lou Blanco's first fitness video, released only three months ago, is a success, so she's getting ready to come out with her second exercise primer.

This is Jackie's way of reaching out to Filipino women of all ages, and encouraging them to firm up their muscles and get rid of excess fat by way of a simple exercise program.

It's complete, from warm-ups to cool-downs, for beginners and other levels, and the exercises can be done anywhere. It teaches women how to get a good workout in only 30 minutes. Watch out for "Working Out with Jackie Lou Blanco, Volume 2," from Viva Video.

'The Ladykillers'

TOM Hanks gets first choice of many of the best film projects in Hollywood, so when he stars in a new film, viewers are pretty much assured that it's choice.

In his latest film, "The Ladykillers," Hanks returns to his comedic roots and teams up for the first time with Oscar-winning filmmaker **Joel** and **Ethan Coen** ("Fargo," "Intolerable Cruelty").

The film is Hanks' first laugh-out-loud comedy in a decade. He stars as a charlatan professor who assembles a gang of fake "experts" for the heist of the century.

Trouble is, an old woman stumbles onto their plot, and they decide to do her in. After all, how hard can it be to knock off a little old lady? Hmmm . . .

Award-winning HBO original movie premiers today

SHOW STOPPER

THURMAN and Lewis are best friends on the prowl for Mr. Right.

UMA THURMAN, Gena Rowlands and Juliette Lewis star in an intimate, character-driven drama, "Hysterical Blindness," which premiers at 8:30 p.m. today on HBO.

A poignant drama about three working-class women in stifling 1980s Bayonne, New Jersey, "Hysterical Blindness" is directed by Mira Nair ("Monsoon Wedding") and executive produced by Thurman, who first saw it as an off-Broadway play.

Touched and impressed by what she saw, Thurman decided to try her hand at turning this play into a movie.

"I found myself laughing and crying," said Thurman in one interview.

"These characters were so familiar to me; I could see myself in them. It reflected life in both a secret and truthful way, and as a play about women, I found it refreshing to have a view from the inside out, about how women feel about themselves."

Two of the women are best friends in their late 20s. The other woman is the mother of one of them. The story revolves around their attempt to build relationships and meaning in their lives, and how these women resort to desperate measures in unrelenting attempts to meet "Mr. Right."

Playing central character Debby, Thurman is a high-strung, intense woman in her 20s, who works as a warehouse clerk by day. By night, she stakes out the local bar, ready to pounce on any man who pays her the slightest attention.

Her friend, Beth (Juliette Lewis), more easygoing, joins her in this continuing game of flirtation and hope, often leaving her 10-year-old daughter to fend for herself.

Meanwhile, Debby's mother, Virginia (Gene Rowlands), is gingerly entering into a new relationship, after being single since her husband walked out on the family.

Thurman and Lewis bring empathy and understanding to their characters. As Debby, Thurman is ever hopeful even as she is so blinded by her desire for a meaningful relationship, while Lewis, who is better known for her kooky, quirky roles, turns in a truly believable yet light-hearted portrayal of single-mother Beth.

With the women's desire for love burning so brightly, it often blinds them to what is obvious for most to see: that in spite of the energy they invest in finding a mate, their real triumph comes when they realize the value of their friendships with one another.

Eventually, what emerges from "Hysterical Blindness" is a cogent character study that explores dysfunctional friendships based as much on jealousy as camaraderie and people simply trying to make that simple human connection.

"Hysterical Blindness" is an award-winning HBO original movie.

Crowd favorite to plant trees . . .

From page A26

MISS Philippines 2004 Szijarto will "try to put nature in the hearts of people."

that man produces.

"In order for us to live a healthy life, we need to get our acts together for the protection and preservation of the environment," she said.

Szijarto, 21, a crowd favorite who consistently topped the swimsuit, casual interview, and the long gown competitions in the semifinal rounds, is a computer engineering junior at the Lyceum of the Philippines.

She will compete in the Manila-based Miss Earth Beauty Pageant slated in October.

The day after her victory, Szijarto was asked by INQUIRER Entertainment about the ouster of two Miss Earth title holders. Original Miss Earth 2002 title holder Dzejla Glavovic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was replaced by Winfred Omwakwe of Kenya. Yodit Getahun was replaced by Muna Kidane-Mariam as Miss Ethiopia-Earth 2003. Both were dethroned for failing to actively promote the pageant's environmental projects.

Said Szijarto, "There are responsibilities that come with winning a beauty contest. One must fulfill whatever is required of her. For her to be an effective ambassador of goodwill, she must be in constant communication with the pageant organizers.

"One must use her yearlong reign to really make a difference," she added.

Filipino-Italian Nadia Camolli, 20, also of NCR, was proclaimed as Miss Philippines-Air, the contest's equivalent of a first runner-up.

NCR delegates Jasmin Chua, 21, and Sheila Alonso, 19, were adjudged Miss Philippines-Water and Miss Philippines Fire, respectively.

Camolli is 20-year-old BS Commerce graduate of the Assumption College who lives in Las Piñas City. In her answer to the final question, she stressed the need to "vanquish the inimical attitude of the people toward the environment." Her response received a resounding applause from the audience

Chua is a BS Accountancy graduate of the College of the Holy Spirit. Alonso is taking up BS Biology at the University of Santo Tomas and hopes to become a doctor someday.

Keithley Anne Campos was the only candidate from outside the NCR to win a title. The 21-year-old from Iloilo is Miss Philippines-Eco-Tourism. She is a BS Accountancy junior at St. Louis University in Baguio City.

Szijarto was also crowned Miss Avon; Chua, Miss Talent and Miss Pond's; and Campos, Texters' Choice Award.

Winners of other special awards are Francis Diane Cervantes, NCR, Miss Close-up Smile; Contessa Maria Santos, Cordillera Administrative Region, Miss Sunsilk Silky Soft Hair; Kathleen Hazel Go, Central Visayas, Miss Photogenic; Rhea Francia Grims, Eastern Visayas, Best in Evening Gown;

Marella Hazel Olea, NCR, Miss Friendship; and Lynn Charisse Revilla, Southern Mindanao Region, Best in Swimsuit.

"The winners of this year's Miss Philippines 2004 are physically stunning, smart and, most of all, have the heart for the environment," said Lorraine Schuck, executive vice president of Carousel Productions which has been producing the beauty pageant since 2000.

See'eMall!

AYALA CINEMAS

ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4		GB3 GREENBELT 3	ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU
1 STARSKY & HUTCH	1 MAN ON FIRE	1 SCHOOL OF ROCK	5 BIG FISH	GUARANTEED SEATS 1 MAN ON FIRE 2 30 5 30, 8 30 11 30	1 PAYCHECK
2 HELLBOY	2 STARSKY & HUTCH	2 MAN ON FIRE	6 STARSKY & HUTCH	GUARANTEED SEATS 2 STARSKY & HUTCH 2 40 4 45 6 50, 8 55 11 10	2 PETER PAN
3 MAN ON FIRE	3 HELLBOY	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 HELLBOY 12 30 3 00 5 30, 8 00 10 30	7 WHOLE 10 YARDS	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 SCHOOL OF ROCK 2 00 4 20, 6 40 9 00 11 20	3 BUTTERFLY EFFECT
4 WHOLE 10 YARDS	4 SCHOOL OF ROCK	4 PAYCHECK		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 WHOLE 10 YARDS 1 05 3 10 5 15 7 20 9 25 11 30	4 DRAGON VS. NINJA
5 SCHOOL OF ROCK				GUARANTEED SEATS 5 HELLBOY 1 20 3 50 6 20 8 50 11 20	5 TAKING LIVES

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 IMAGINING ARGENTINA 11 30, 1 30, 3 30, 5 30, 7 30, 9 30
2 STARSKY & HUTCH 11:30, 1 30, 3 35, 5 40, 7 45, 9 50

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
INQUIRER JOB MARKET'S JOBZ: EMPLOYMENT EXPO 2004 MAY 4 to 6, 2004	SIDE A LIVE! May 9, 2004	CENTER FOR POP MUSIC CONCERT May 9, 2004

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GLORIETTA	GREENBELT
HARD ROCK CAFÉ, GLORIETTA 3 For inquiries, pls. Call 893-4661 to 66	MERK'S: Happy Hour- Romy Posadas, Acoustic Jive (9pm TAVERN ON THE SQUARE: For inquiries pls. call 757-4484-85

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ENTERTAINMENT

Crowd favorite to plant trees during her reign

By Marinel R. Cruz

WHILE most other beauty titleholders spend their reign in a lot of pictorials, parties, fund-raising and the usual distribution of gifts to poor children, Miss Philippines 2004 Tamera Marie Szijarto will be spearheading environmental projects such as tree planting, mangrove restoration, and a regional environmental awareness campaign.

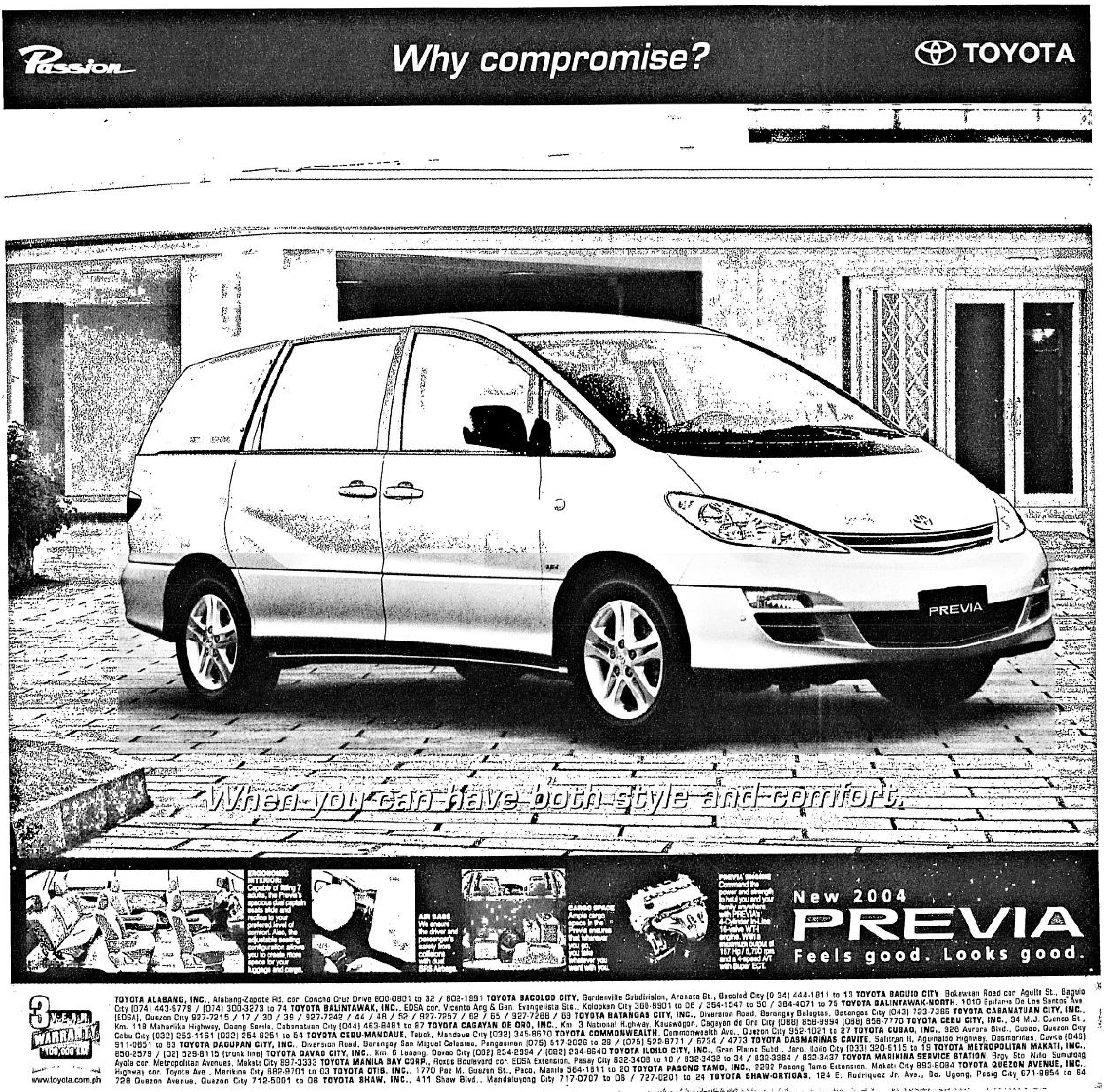
During the pageant finals at the UP Theater in Diliman, Quezon City, the Filipino-Hungarian beauty from the National Capital Region and the other finalists were asked the make-or-break question: "When Mother Nature was asked who she should endorse as the country's leader, she chose you. Now, what would you do first?"

"I would try to put nature in the hearts of the people," Szijarto quickly replied. Being an engineering student, she said, made her aware of the many kinds of environment-threatening wastes

CROWD/ A25

A TRIUMPHANT Szijarto (middle) with runners-up (from left) Shiela Alonso, Jasmin Chua, Nadia Camolli and Keithley Anne Campos

AUGUST DELA CRUZ



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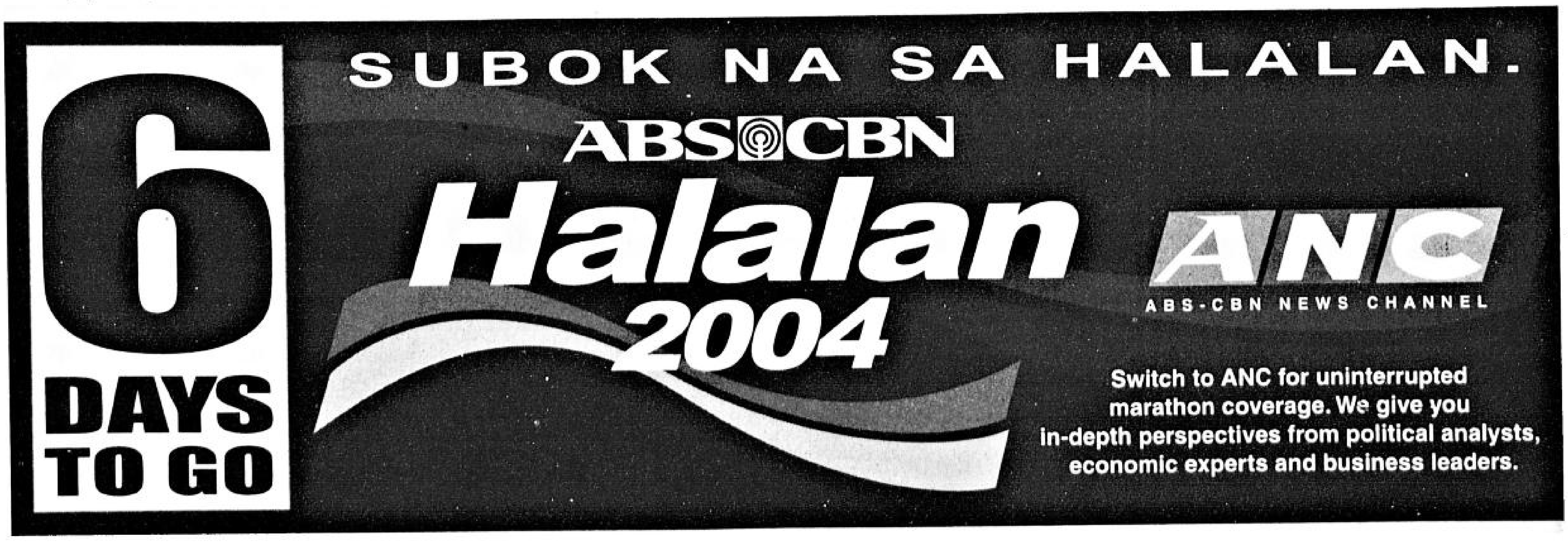

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Past-due credit card loans hit ₱14.3B

By Doris C. Dumlao

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As the combined credit card receivables of commercial banks and thrift banks stood at P59 billion during the period, this meant that 24.3 percent or almost a fourth of these banks' exposure to credit cards had fallen past due.

With the rising past-due exposure linked to the cutthroat competition in the credit card business, the BSP's policy-making Monetary Board issued last August a circular requiring a stronger risk management system for the credit card operations of banks and their subsidiaries.

The credit card business accounted for about 3.5 percent of commercial and thrift banks' total loan portfolio. The P59 billion worth of exposure in 2003 represented an increase of 8.9 percent from a year ago.

As a ratio of the combined nonperforming loans of these banks, past-due credit card receivables accounted for 4.9 percent, rising from 3.3 percent in 2002.

Foreign commercial banks held 49.8 percent of these credit card receivables, while local banks and thrift bank subsidiaries accounted for the balance.

Aware of rising credit card collection problems, the BSP has tightened the requirements for banks which wanted to engage in this business. It also required better disclosure especially of finance charges and their method of computation.

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Meanwhile, past-due auto loans of commercial banks and thrift banks likewise went up slightly to 6.3 percent of total auto loans from 6.08 percent in 2002.

Compared to the third quarter, the end-2003 exposure to auto loans grew by a meager 0.4 percent. The BSP attributed the sluggish growth in auto loan exposures to the implementation of the new law rationalizing the excise tax on automobiles (RA 9224), which took effect in October last year.

The law, which had introduced taxes on Asian utility vehicles among others, resulted in some buyers deferring purchases of new units.

The ratio of total auto loans to total loan portfolio net of interbank loans slightly declined to 2.8 from 2.9 percent as of end-December compared to end-September.

For commercial banks alone, the exposure to auto loans rose by 3.61 percent to P14.11 billion from a year ago, but this level represented a 1.19-percent decline from the previous quarter.

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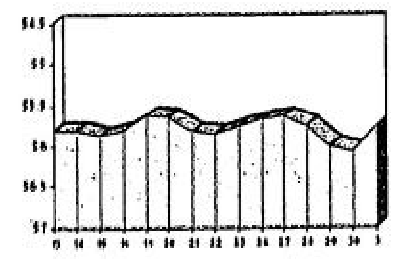
PAST-DUE/B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



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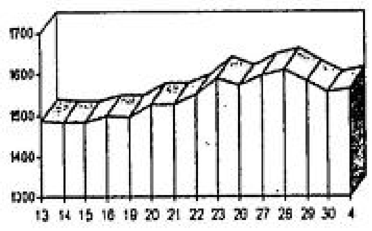
GOLD: $387.90-388.40

per ounce Hong Kong, May 3, 2004

May 3, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.834794223	1.000000	56.0340
Japan	Yen	0.00756	0.009056	0.5074
United Kingdom	Pound	1.484431	1.778200	99.6397
Hongkong	Dollar	0.107035	0.128217	7.1845
Switzerland	Franc	0.644678	0.772260	43.2728
Canada	Dollar	0.608983	0.729501	40.8769
Singapore	Dollar	0.490335	0.587372	32.9128
Australia	Dollar	0.602652	0.721917	40.4519
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.214426	2.652661	148.6392
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.222618	0.266674	14.9428
Brunei	Dollar	0.488899	0.585652	32.8164
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000096	0.000115	0.0064
Thailand	Baht	0.020875	0.025006	1.4012
UAE	Dirham	0.227291	0.272272	15.2565
Euro	Euro	1	1.197900	67.1231
Argentina	Peso	0.293425	0.351494	19.6956
Brazil	REAL	0.284233	0.340483	19.0786
Denmark	Kroner	0.134408	0.161007	9.0219
India	Rupee	0.018793	0.022512	1.2614
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.219712	0.263193	14.7478
Mexico	New Peso	0.073151	0.087627	4.9101
New Zealand	Dollar	0.522923	0.626409	35.1002
Norway	Kroner	0.121644	0.145717	8.1651
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014556	0.017437	0.9771
South Africa	Rand	0.120876	0.144797	8.1136
Korea	Won	0.000711	0.000852	0.0477
Sweden	Kroner	0.109262	0.130885	7.3340
Syria	Pound	0.016147	0.019342	1.0838
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025167	0.030148	1.6893
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000436	0.000522	0.0292

STOCK MARKET

Shares up on bargain-hunting



THE MAIN stock index closed higher yesterday on bargain-hunting in select blue chips following two sessions of losses, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended up 7.64 points, or 0.5 percent, at 1562.65. Friday, the index fell 1.7 percent, bringing the total index loss to 3.4 percent since Thursday.

The strong quarterly earnings of blue-chip banks helped spur buying. Bank of the Philippine Islands rose P2.50, or 6.3 percent, to P42.50 after the country's second-largest bank posted late Friday a higher first-quarter net profit than a year ago.

Metropolitan Bank, the country's largest commercial bank, rose 50 centavos, or 2 percent, to P25.50 after the bank reported a 43-percent rise in first-quarter net profit.

However, decliners led gainers 26 to 15, while 34 stocks were unchanged as some investors chose to pocket gains, wary in the run-up to the May 10 national elections. *AP*

Smart extends offer to buy Piltel debt

By Clarissa S. Batino

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Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), the parent firm of Smart and Piltel, said yesterday this was the final extension. The offer originally was due to expire on April 20 before being extended to last Friday.

News of the low level of acceptance by creditors sent Piltel shares plunging by 12 centavos or 7.06 percent to P1.58.

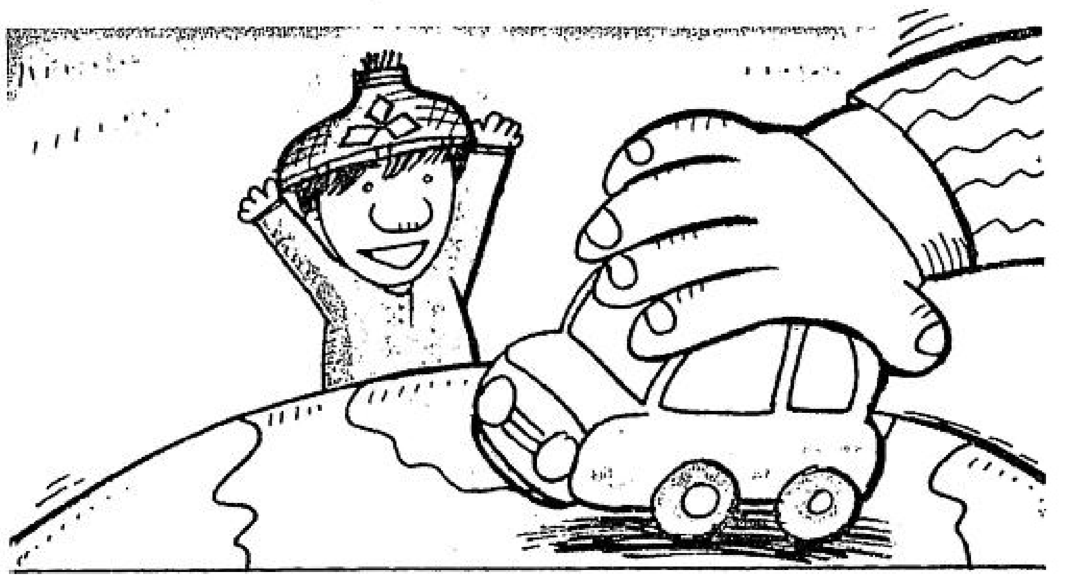
The debt-exchange offer will push through if at least 75 percent of Piltel's debt is swapped with Smart debt. If that deal is successful, Smart would buy PLDT's 45.3-percent stake in Piltel for an undisclosed amount.

"As of last Friday evening, some of those creditors submitted their offers and Smart has now received offers in respect of more than 50 percent of the aggregate value of Piltel debt," PLDT said in a statement.

"This level is, however, still below the threshold set by Smart." PLDT said Smart would not alter the terms of the offer.

Smart said it has set aside $20 million for the deal, proposing to pay 40 cents for every $1 of Piltel debt. Creditors can also swap their Piltel debt for Smart obligations.

SMART/B2



Mitsubishi unit eyes RP as base for SUV exports

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MITSUBISHI Motors Philippines Corp. yesterday said it hoped to be the Mitubishi group's global export base of completely built sports utility vehicles as it geared up to take advantage of new perks for the industry.

Company senior vice president Melchor R. Dizon said in an interview that DaimlerChrysler's recent announcement that it was not infusing new capital into Mitsubishi gave opportunities for MMPC to be the group's overseas production base of a new SUV model.

DaimlerChrysler is the biggest stakeholder in Mitsubishi Motors with 37 percent. It was earlier rumored to sell its stake, but said eventually that it was holding on for now.

"We have existing facilities in the country and all we have to do is to modernize to attain export competitiveness," Dizon said.

In a statement, MMPC president and chief executive Kengo Takase expressed appreciation of "the very positive environment" the government was providing for export-oriented vehicle manufacturing.

Takase was referring to the amendment to EO 244, which was signed last May 1 and expanded the coverage of incentives under the automotive export program.

EO 244 allows for the di-

MITSUBISHI/B3

Debt yields slide

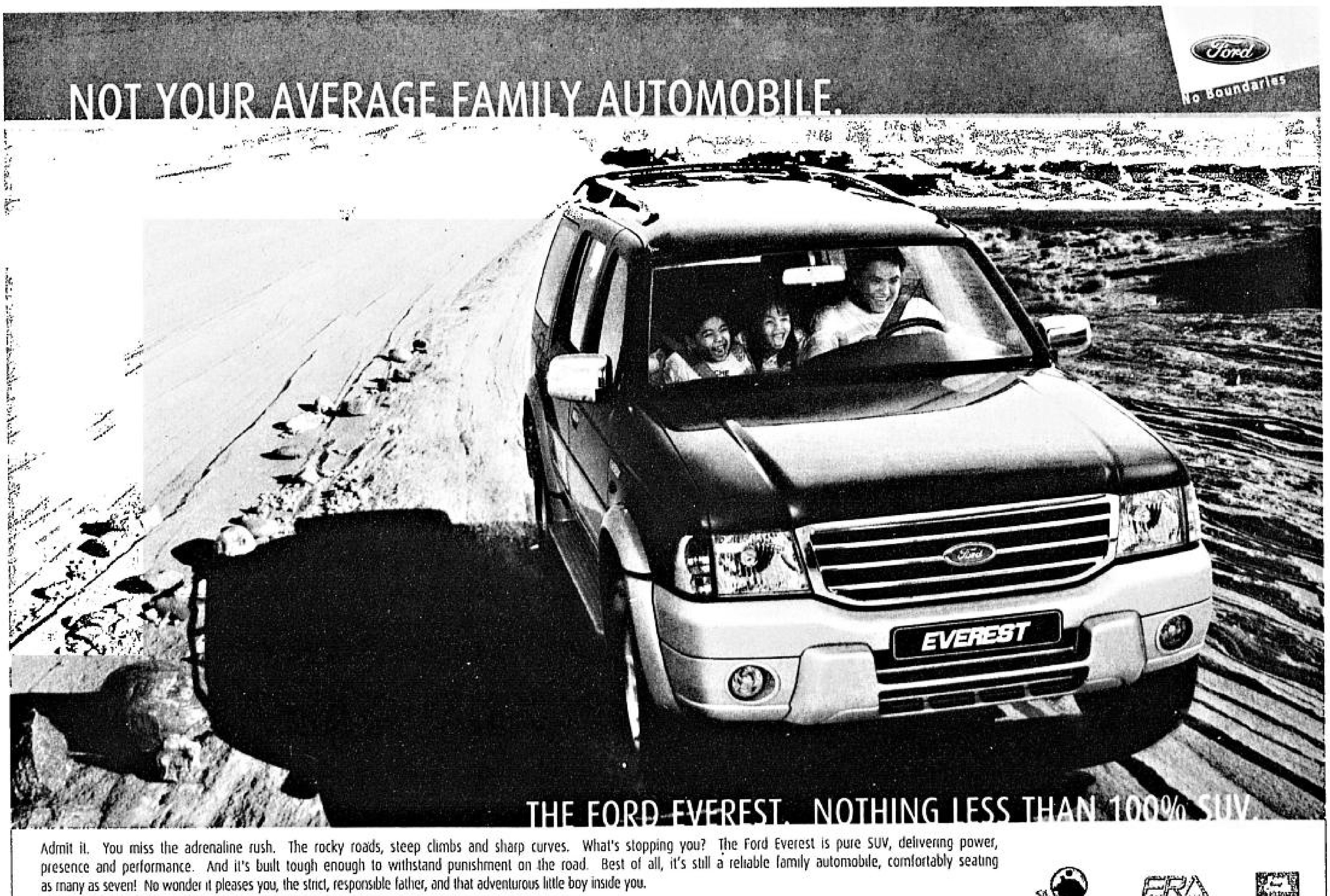
YIELDS on treasury bonds with maturities from two to five years edged lower yesterday as players warmed to signs that President Macapagal-Arroyo will win a second term in the May 10 polls.

Reports said that the influential Christian sect Iglesia ni Cristo, known to vote as a group with a force estimated at around two million voters, has decided to endorse Ms Macapagal as its candidate in next week's national elections.

Treasury bill rates were hardly changed but yields on the longer-term tenors slid 10 to 15 basis points from last week, dealers said.

About 43 million voters will troop to polling centers next Monday to choose a president, vice president, Senate, Lower House of Congress, and thousands of local positions.

Rates of treasury paper had inched down since last week after opinion polls showed that Ms Macapagal had pulled away in the presidential race. *Reuters*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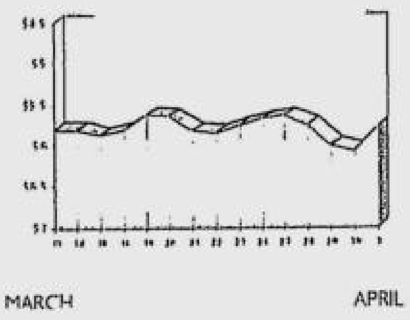

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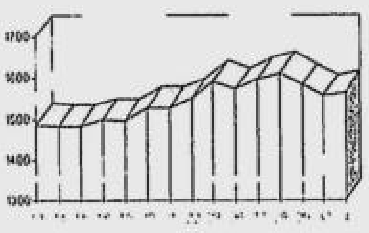

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Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), the parent firm of Smart and Piltel, said yesterday this was the final extension. The offer originally was due to expire on April 20 before being extended to last Friday

News of the low level of acceptance by creditors sent Piltel shares plunging by 12 centavos or 7.06 percent to P1.58.

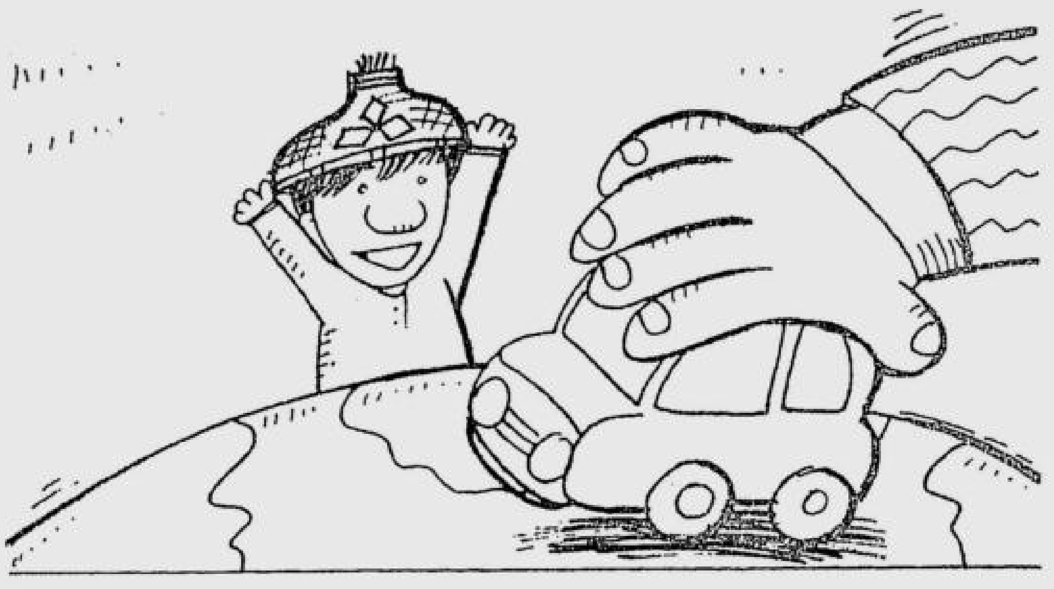
The debt-exchange offer will push through if at least 75 percent of Piltel's debt is swapped with Smart debt. If that deal is successful, Smart would buy PLDT's 45.3-percent stake in Piltel for an undisclosed amount.

"As of last Friday evening, some of those creditors submitted their offers and Smart has now received offers in respect of more than 50 percent of the aggregate value of Piltel debt," PLDT said in a statement.

"This level is, however, still below the threshold set by Smart," PLDT said Smart would not alter the terms of the offer.

Smart said it has set aside $20 million for the deal, proposing to pay 40 cents for every $1 of Piltel debt. Creditors can also swap their Piltel debt for Smart obligations.

SMART B2



Mitsubishi unit eyes RP as base for SUV exports

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MITSUBISHI Motors Philippines Corp. yesterday said it hoped to be the Mitubishi group's global export base of completely built sports utility vehicles as it geared up to take advantage of new perks for the industry.

Company senior vice president Melchor R. Dizon said in an interview that DaimlerChrysler's recent announcement that it was not infusing new capital into Mitsubishi gave opportunities for MMPC to be the group's overseas production base of a new SUV model.

DaimlerChrysler is the biggest stakeholder in Mitsubishi Motors with 37 percent. It was earlier rumored to sell its stake, but said eventually that it was holding on for now.

"We have existing facilities in the country and all we have to do is to modernize to attain export competitiveness," Dizon said.

In a statement, MMPC president and chief executive Kengo Takase expressed appreciation of "the very positive environment" the government was providing for export-oriented vehicle manufacturing.

Takase was referring to the amendment to EO 244, which was signed last May 1 and expanded the coverage of incentives under the automotive export program.

EO 244 allows for the di-

MITSUBISHI B3

Debt yields slide

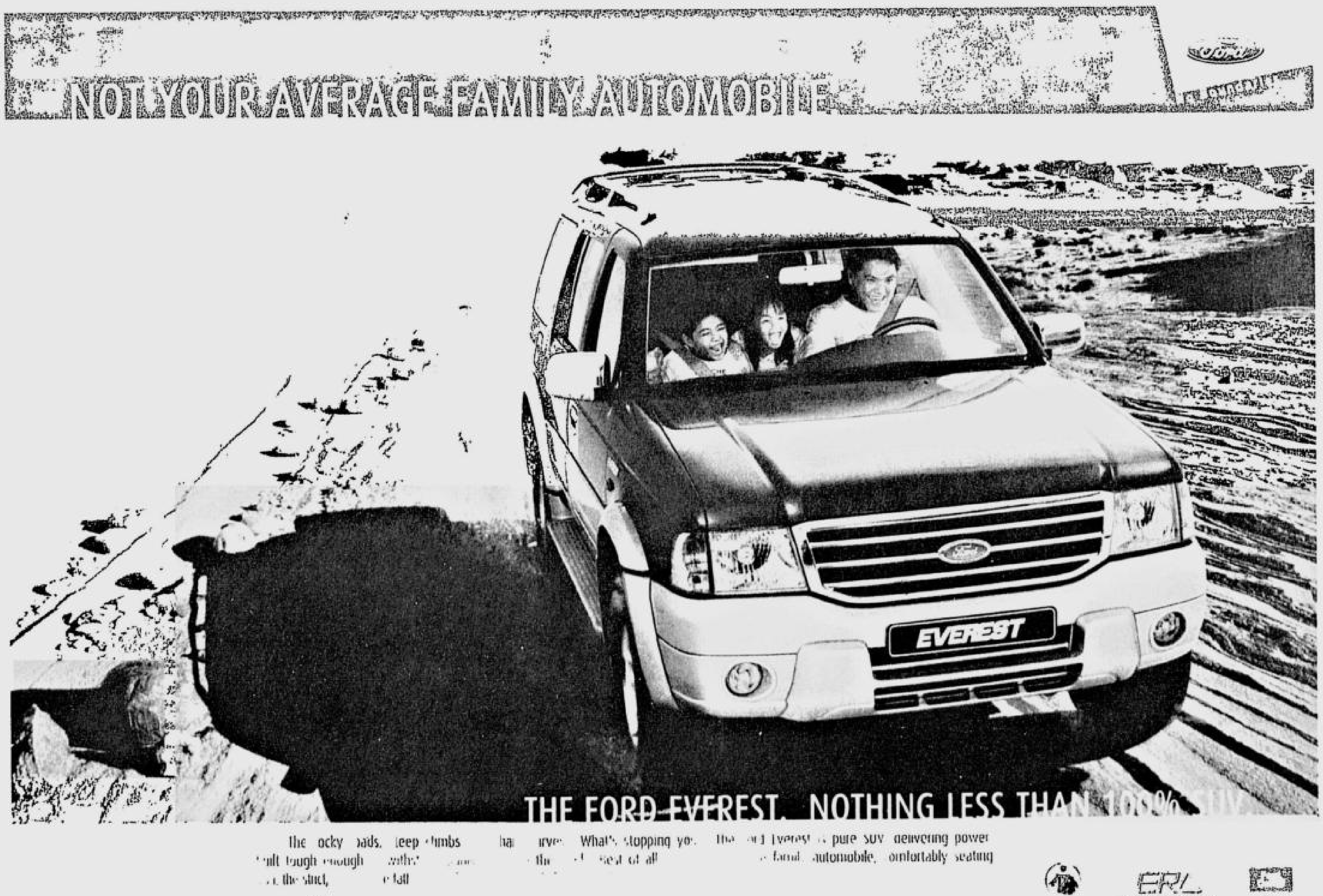
YIELDS on treasury bonds with maturities from two to five years edged lower yesterday as players warmed to signs that President Macapagal-Arroyo will win a second term in the May 10 polls.

Reports said that the influential Christian sect Iglesia ni Cristo, known to vote as a group with a force estimated at around two million voters, has decided to endorse Ms Macapagal as its candidate in next week's national elections.

Treasury bill rates were hardly changed but yields on the longer-term tenors slid 10 to 15 basis points from last week, dealers said.

About 43 million voters will troop to polling centers next Monday to choose president, vice president, Senate Lower House of Congress and thousands of local positions

Rates of treasury paper had inched down since last week after opinion polls showed that Ms Macapagal had pulled away in the presidential race *Reuters*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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Lead in all you survey

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

EVEN in that top secret "internal" survey done by Malacañang recently, the former newscaster Sen. Noli de Castro led all the candidates for vice president.

His lead over his nearest rival, former newscaster Sen. Loren Legarda, was so convincing even Malacañang strategists were tempted to release the secret to media.

Oops, wrong move! Somebody else in the Palace, who happens to be the lord of all you survey, was not, er, "leading" in that same survey even if the same somebody was leading the other surveys which were apparently meant for public consumption.

And that's why the Wednesday group in the Senate, made up of five senators, including De Castro, has all the reasons in the world to throw a tantrum.

* * *

MAKING up the Wednesday group, aside from De Castro, are the first-term senators Ralph Recto, Manuel Villar, Francisco Pangilinan and Joker Arroyo.

Not too long ago, the same group was egging De Castro to run for president since he consistently lorded over all the surveys, both for public and for internal use.

But somebody prevailed upon De Castro to run for vice president instead. Lately, nevertheless, attacks against De Castro have become vicious.

Issues have been raised against the broadcast journalist on reports he aired on television some seven years ago. That kind of vicious!

* * *

WITH the elections just a few days away, is it any wonder some unknown group has filed a disqualification case against De Castro?

Commenting on the case, Sen. Joker Arroyo called the group a "bogus foundation with a sordid past and with an impostor for its chair-president."

Everybody knows that Arroyo does not mince words, everybody including former Sen. Francisco Tatad who got a sample of the famous Arroyo vile during the impeachment of the man named Band ... Wrist Band.

And so this time Arroyo asks: "How can the Comelec entertain a complaint from a foundation whose chair-president claims he is the real Bongbong Marcos and that he is the key to the Marcos millions?"

That kind of bogus!

Of course all the attacks had something to do with De Castro's lead in all the surveys. Even the usually cool De Castro, I heard, got mad. He is filing libel cases.

* * *

YOU can say of course that De Castro's top standing in the surveys, even before the campaign started, was due mainly to his popularity as a newscaster.

But then again the political career of Legarda herself was also a product of television. Both of them in fact came from the same television network.

This much I also know about De Castro's short stint in the Senate: The man works hard. In fact, he has filed some 140 bills.

His staff told me that the senator either authored or co-authored 24 of the 39 bills which the Senate passed in the past three years.

It means that De Castro outworked all the other first-termers in the Senate in his first try at public service. That was something surveys did not show.

* * *

NOW you cannot—never—take his popularity as a newscaster in the same light as one's popularity in, say, the field of sports, i.e. basketball or, for that matter, the movies, i.e., "Anak Ni Nardong Putik."

From my conversation with De Castro in the past, I know that he embraced issues in the Senate that he encountered firsthand as a journalist.

One good example is the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2003, which grants benefits to senior citizens no matter their social or economic status.

Under the old law, for instance, senior citizens who earned more than P60,000 a year were not qualified to get discounts on medicine and such.

But how could anybody know the income of senior citizens? Look, nobody was checking anybody's income, not even Jose Pidal's. What more the senior citizens? Duh!

* * *

UNDER the De Castro law, any senior citizen can now enjoy a 20-percent discount on land, sea or air fare, funeral and burial services, medical and dental services, etc.

Even on doctor's fee, senior citizens can now get a discount. Although there is no standard fee, doctors can actually jack up the fees to cover the mandated discount.

Still, under the same law, if you go to government facilities, you don't pay anything for medical services, including tests and things like lobotomy.

I know that, if only for the 20 percent discount on everything, a lot of us cannot wait to become senior citizens. It is not easy to be that old. Go ahead, ask JPE!

* * *

YOU may have all the rights, legally, but because of some quirks of the legal system—our special brand of legal system—you cannot do anything to exercise your rights.

And so thanks to our legal system, a certain small-time businessman, Selwyn Lao, who is an engineer by profession, is getting desperate.

It seems that Lao was trying to contest the decision of the provincial government of Abra, headed by Gov. Vicente Valera, to sell an idle government property to a foreign firm.

The property is called the CRC, or the Cellophil Resources Corp., which used to belong to the Herdis Group, headed by Marcos crony Herminio Disini.

Recently, the government of Abra conducted a bidding for the property. Lao's company, Wing An Construction, submitted a bid of P65 million.

Whadayano—the government of Abra did not know how to count. Well, they awarded the sale to a Singaporean group which offered only P55 million!

* * *

HURRIEDLY, Lao and company filed a case in court, seeking to stop the sale to the Singaporean group.

In effect, Lao wanted the court to issue a TRO against both the Abra government and the Singaporean company.

Well, word went around that even before Lao could be notified on the questionable decision of the Abra government, the Singaporeans were already dismantling the old equipment on the factory site.

With the price of scrap metal hitting another time zone somewhere in the vicinity of Mars, the Singaporeans already made a killing from the old equipment alone.

But Lao could not get the TRO. Do you know what the court said? Well, it said that it could not issue the TRO because the Singaporeans did not get the court summons.

To avoid receiving the court summons, as you know, the Singaporean group could just move from one office to another. Every foreigner in this country knows that's the easiest way to beat the legal system!

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 3, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	100,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	41	42.5	41	42.5	192,600
China Banking Corp.	660	660	660	660	4,200
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	3,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	39	39	38.5	39	14,000
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	10,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25	25.5	25	25.5	212,000
Philippine National Bank	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	1,100
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.25	12.25	12	12	16,900
Security Bank Corp.	16.5	17	16.5	17	1,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	1,500
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.34	1.32	1.34	215,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	130	130	130	130	160
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1460	1465	1460	1465	480
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24	24	23.75	23.75	7,100
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	70,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	850	870	850	865	45,170
Ipeople Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	10,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.037	0.037	0.037	100,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.68	1.68	1.58	1.58	23,145,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1080	1100	1075	1075	178,970
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	32,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.25	19.5	19.25	19.25	79,600
Manila Electric Co. B	31	31	30	30	1,454,700
Petron Corp.	3.25	3.25	3.15	3.15	2,377,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.4	1.4	844,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.85	3	2.85	3	114,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	100,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	20,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	750,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	20.25	21	20.25	21	388,800
Liberty Flour Mills Inc.	15	15	15	15	12,100
RFM Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	10,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	20,000
San Miguel Corp. A	59.5	59.5	59	59.5	59,500
San Miguel Corp. B	74.5	74.5	74.5	74.5	5,000
Universal Robina Corp.	7	7	6.9	7	1,948,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	350,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	6,658,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	111,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	1,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	300,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	1,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.57	0.57	0.56	0.56	3,870,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.25	.25	.25	50,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.024	9,200,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	27.5	28	27.5	27.5	760,100
Global Equities Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	100,000
Ionics Inc.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	12,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.14	1.16	1.14	1.16	490,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	120,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.155	0.155	120,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	15	15	15	15	4,400
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	21,700,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.98	0.98	0.9	0.9	50,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	45,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.12	7,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23.75	24	23.75	23.75	32,500
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.6	12,498,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	10,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	140,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.18	0.18	0.165	0.165	60,840,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	1,370,000
SM Development Corp.	1.12	1.16	1.12	1.16	252,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.2	2,823,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	260,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	160,000
Omico Corp.	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	5,000,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0026	0.0028	0.0026	0.0028	7,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	50,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	160,000

PLDT, Globe seen to report huge first-quarter earnings

THE COUNTRY'S two top telephone firms are set to report huge gains in quarterly profits this week and upbeat conditions for the near-term as better and cheaper services convince more Filipinos to go mobile.

Analysts said number one PLDT and second-ranked Globe Telecom Inc. should see profits rise in the current quarter as the May 10 national elections prompt a flood of text messages and calls in this gossip-loving nation.

PLDT, a fourth of which is owned by Hong Kong's First Pacific Co. Ltd., is set to announce its first quarter results today.

Globe, which is jointly controlled by conglomerate Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecommunications, tomorrow will follow suit.

Reuters Research, a unit of Reuters Plc, forecasts PLDT's 2004 net income would rise 64 percent to P18.34 billion from P11.2 billion in 2003.

Globe Telecom's profit is seen rising 31.7 percent to P13.6 billion from 2003's P10.34 billion.

"We are still very optimistic over PLDT and Globe," said RCBC research head Chelsea Dipasupil. "They're hot commodities. It's a service that has become very popular, affordable, necessary and functional."

PLDT has 58 percent of the mobile phone market through its banner cellular unit Smart Communications Inc. and smaller subsidiary Pilipino Telephone Corp (Piltel).

A foreign telecoms analyst said PLDT, or Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., made P4.7 billion in net income in the first quarter, almost double last year's P2.5 billion.

Globe, which has 40 percent of the market, was projected to have made net income of P2.8 billion, up 40 percent from P2 billion in 2003.

Smart and Globe both launched new services in 2003 that enabled subscribers to buy mobile phone credits via text messaging for as low as 30 pesos ($0.53), making it more affordable for poor Filipinos.

Previously, the cheapest pre-paid card had cost 100 pesos.

Subscribers can now transfer credits to one another for a transaction fee of one peso, helping stimulate usage further.

"Profits both for PLDT and Globe should be higher," said Richard Tan, telecoms analyst at CLSA Philippines. "Globe launched its over-the-air loading service only in November, so the full impact should be in the first quarter."

Analysts said there was still room for strong growth, with only 28 percent of the country's 82 million people estimated to have owned a mobile phone at the end of 2003.

At least one analyst predicted a penetration rate of 36 percent by the end of 2004, rising to 45 percent in 2006.

After falling 2.1 percent in the first quarter, PLDT shares have risen over the past month to stand 10.8 percent higher this year.

That follows a 260-percent surge in 2003.

Globe, which rose 92 percent last year, is up just 0.58 percent this year after falling 4.7 percent in the first quarter.

"Share prices of these stocks went up sharply ahead of the market ... the decline (in the first quarter) is part of a healthy correction," said RCBC's Dipasupil. "Since they're coming from a higher base, the correction was steeper."

Reuters

Past-due credit . . .

From page B1

sure to auto loans while the commercial bank sector accounted for the remaining 30.1 percent.

The thrift bank sector lent out P32.72 billion for automobile purchases as of end-2003, 14.58 percent better than a year ago but only a 1.02-percent increase from a quarter ago.

But while banks can foreclose on automobiles in case of bad loans and at least recover the depreciated value, it is more difficult to cut losses from defaults of credit card borrowers as these are unsecured lending.

In its latest banking report, the BSP acknowledged that the asset quality situation of the banking system remained "a cause for concern."

Smart extends offer . . .

From page B1

Piltel defaulted on its debt payments in 1999 and declared a moratorium on P41.1 billion ($738 million) worth of obligations. After a restructuring in 2001, it was left with a debt of P20.5 billion.

Analysts have said the offer could be a prelude to a merger, which would help PLDT consolidate its mobile business and give Smart access to Piltel's improving subscriber base and revenues.

But Smart has said it did not intend to enter a legal merger with Piltel or use Piltel as a means of getting a backdoor listing on the stock exchange. Under its franchise, Smart is required to list its shares by August.

Smart and Piltel together hold 58 percent of the lucrative but only partially penetrated Philippine mobile market. PLDT's chief rival Globe Telecom Inc. has 40 percent.

Bank of the Philippine Islands and Land Bank of the Philippines, jointly accounting for 28 percent of Piltel's total debt, withheld their approval of the debt transaction unless Smart could assure them that converting their Piltel exposure to 12-year sovereign-backed bonds would have no problems with monetary authorities, according to sources.

Banking sources said China Banking Corp. and Credit Agricole had rejected Smart's debt-swap offer. The four banks combined account for 33 percent of Piltel's total debt.

Another source said that Japanese supplier Marubeni Corp. had accepted Smart's offer to convert Piltel's outstanding obligations into a 10-year Smart debt maturing in 2014 with a fixed interest of 2.25 percent a year but with an option to be paid either in December 2007 or December 2008 but with a 47.5 US cents and 42.5 US cents discount.

Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. also agreed to swap its exposure to a 10-year Smart debt.

PLDT president Napoleon Nazareno said that Marubeni would account for about 35 percent of Piltel's total obligations.

In acquiring the Piltel stake, profitable Smart could use the tax credits of its affiliate to reduce its tax payments.

Piltel has about P13.5 billion in net operating loss carryover or Nolco benefits incurred in 2001 and 2002 that should lead to tax savings of P4.3 billion this year and next for Smart.

An official from one of Piltel's biggest creditors said that the debt-swap options offered by Smart would entail severe losses especially for banks that have not fully provided for the soured Piltel loan in their books.

GOINGS ON

Franchise show in July

THE PHILIPPINE Franchise Association (PFA) and the Department of Trade and Industry will hold the country's biggest franchise show, Franchise 2004, the 12th Philippine International Conference and Expo (PIFCE) on July 15-18.

A virtual one-stop shopping for franchising with a four-in-one event, Franchise 2004 consists of plenary sessions on July 15 and educational seminars/workshops for would-be franchisers and franchisees on July 16, both at the Westin Philippine Plaza; the biggest franchise expo on July 16-18 at the World Trade Center (WTC), and the Certificate on Franchise Executives (CFE) Program on July 13-14 at the Asian Institute of Management (AIM).

For inquiries, call the PFA Secretariat at 687-03-66 to 67, or email at pfa@nwave.net.

Chinatrust's new directors

CHINATRUST (Philippines) Commercial Bank Corp. announced the election of new directors during a recent board meeting.

Vice chair Thomas Chen and directors Jerry Harn and Peter Liu resigned from the board to take up other responsibilities in Chinatrust's parent bank in Taiwan. Replacing them on the board are Erich Chen, John Li and James Chen.

Eric Chen was also elected chair of Chinatrust Philippines, replacing Dr. Jeffrey L.S. Koo who will take up the post of honorary chair.

The new directors are all key officers of the parent company in Taiwan.

4 banks post Q1 profit gains

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

METROPOLITAN Bank & Trust Co. (Metrobank), the country's largest bank, said its net earnings grew 43 percent for the first three months to P665 million from P465 million during the same period last year.

In its disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Metrobank said the growth was driven by net interest income which ballooned 17.24 percent to P2.63 billion, while other income also increased 9.73 percent to P2.05 billion from P1.87 billion.

Interest expense also jumped 13 percent to P3.57 billion from P3.16 billion, while other expenses increased 6.63 percent to P3.71 billion.

Metrobank set aside more funds for doubtful accounts by 84 percent to P300 million from P163 million. As of March 23, total resources of the bank stood at P522 billion, while capital was at P54.3 billion.

Second largest lender Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) meanwhile reported a 19-percent increase in earnings to P1.6 billion for the first quarter from P1.4 billion also on higher net interest income.

Total revenue was up 10 percent, the bank said without saying the exact figure. But it said in its quarterly report that net interest income reached P2.7 billion, as a result of interest income—from loans, investments and trading accounts and deposit with banks—at P4.55 billion less interest expense at P1.68 billion and gross receipts taxes at P165 million.

On its part, Unionbank of the Philippines yesterday reported a slight increase in net earnings by 6.4 percent to P500 million in the first quarter from P470 million in the same period last year. The bank said total revenues rose 16.9 percent to P1.2 billion, while gross interest income stood at P984 million.

Non-interest income stood at P600 million, largely led by earnings from foreign exchange and capital market deals. The bank's capital adequacy ratio, or capital to cover for risky assets, improved to 46.7 percent from 42.2 percent as of end-December, way above the Bangko Sentral's requirement that banks set aside 10 percent of capital for such assets.

Philippine Savings Bank, the country's second biggest savings bank said its income for the first quarter grew 30 percent to P81 million.

PSBank president Pascual Garcia III said the growth in the first three months was driven by the increase in consumer loans despite higher expenses.

Revenues increased 36.4 percent to P155.5 million as of March while expenses rose 26 percent as the bank expanded its branch network.

As of April 19, the bank opened 11 more branches, bringing its total network to 121.

The bank recorded robust growth in net earnings last year of 34.5 percent to P403.2 million with total resources growing 21 percent.

DISCLOSURES

BELLE Corp. will hold its annual stockholders meeting on June 3 at the Magellan Rm., Discovery Suites, ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Stockholders of record as of May 3 will be entitled to notice of and vote at the meeting.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Grand Plaza Hotel Corp.** were Wong Hong Ren, Chan Bernard Charnwut, Bryan Cockrell, Angelito Imperio, Mia Gentugaya, Peter Kan and Guia Qua. The company also disclosed the re-appointment of auditing firms Fernandez, Santos & Lopez as its external auditors.

* * *

CASHROUNDS Inc. disclosed the resignation of Emmanuel F. Laforteza as corporate secretary. Linnette Serrano will temporarily take his place.

Compiled by Erika Sarmiento, PDI Research

Napocor to raise ₱20B from local bond market

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE STATE-OWNED utility National Power Corp. plans to tap the domestic bond market anew in order to raise an additional P20 billion for its refinancing requirements.

Deutsche Bank and First Metro Investment Corp, (FMIC) are working to secure the mandate for the P20-billion borrowing, FMIC executive vice president Robert Juanchito Dispo said in an interview.

Dispo said that Napocor was still raising more funds for its refinancing program. The proposed borrowing would carry sovereign guarantee.

Market players expected Napocor's new peso borrowing to be offered in tranches.

The national government recently raised $400 million in bonds on behalf of Napocor, which is finding it more expensive to borrow money on its own given its debt problems.

The government itself has raised the bulk of its own foreign financing requirements but is helping Napocor source funds at a lower cost.

For its part, Napocor is raising the remaining funds needed to cover $1.4 billion worth of refinancing for this year.

Late last month, Napocor issued P12.55 billion worth of zero-coupon bonds, its first ever local currency issue, from which it raised P5.64 billion in cash.

It issued P3.752 billion worth of bonds due 2009 and another P8.8 billion due 2011. The 2009 bonds were priced at a discount yield of 50 basis points over the five-year fixed-rate treasury note rate and the 2011 bond at a yield of 62.5 basis points over the seven-year FXTN rate.

ING Bank, which was the sole arranger for Napocor's zero-coupon bond issue, has a mandate to raise a total of $400 million for the state utility, other bankers said.

Despite Congress' failure to pass the bill giving a proper franchise to the Power Sector Asset and Liabilities Management (PSALM), the government is trying to find ways to privatize the assets of Napocor to reduce its burgeoning debt.

Debt yields . . .

From page B1

rect export of completely built units at a minimum volume of 10,000 units a year, each of which should be worth at least $5,000.

Included in the expanded coverage is the allowance for direct export of completely new basic models designed primarily for exclusive export at least to Southeast Asian countries at a minimum of 5,000 units a year for at least $5,000 each.

"We are very delighted about this development," he said. "Definitely this is a great challenge for MMPC as well as our vendors."

Last week, MMPC announced it was laying out P10 billion for its SUV export project that calls for the production of at least 200,000 units within six to seven years from 2006.

Takase said two-thirds of the output would be exported to the Southeast Asian market and possibly to the Middle East, Africa and South America.

He added that the project was expected to yield between $200 million and $240 million in vehicle export value each year, aside from generating some 6,000 new jobs.

Takase said further that MMPC was already meeting local parts makers to assist them and assure their successful participation in the SUV export project.

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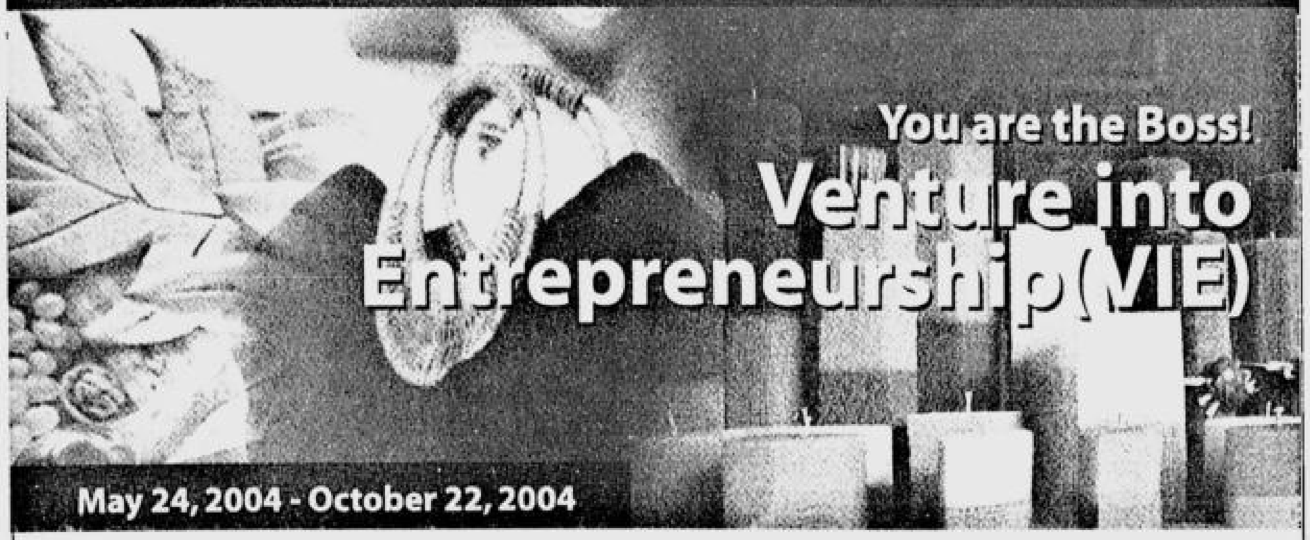
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FINANCE FOR NON-FINANCE MANAGERS
Date: June 1-3, 2004 Time: 8:30 am - 5: 30 pm Fee: P8,500.00

- Be familiar with the nature and scope of financial management;
- Learn to analyze basic financial statements through the computation of ratios;
- Obtain an overview of working capital management and the capital budgeting process;
- Attain greater understanding of funds flow statements; and
- Gain confidence in financial planning i.e., in the preparation of projected financial statements.

STRATEGIC MARKETING MANAGEMENT
Date: May 19-20, 2004 Time: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm Fee: P8,500.00

- Acquire a working knowledge of the basic concepts and principles of strategic marketing management;
- Develop analytical skills necessary to formulate effective marketing strategies;
- Integrate the concepts and techniques learned in implementing business decisions;
- Learn how to infuse a strategic marketing orientation in the light of new developments and issues in the Philippines and global market.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP
Date: June 8-10, 2004 Time: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm Fee: P10,500.00

- Describe the differences between project and functional management;
- Apply financial techniques in comparing and selecting projects;
- Describe the elements of a statement of work (SOW);
- Develop a Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) and schedules using the Gantt Chart;
- Control project budgets and schedules using Earned Value concepts and formulas.

SUPERVISION: THE KEY TO GREATER PRODUCTIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE
Date: May 31-June 1, 2004 Time: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm Fee: P8,500.00

- Understand supervisory work and to look at it as the most important key element that brings about productivity in the workplace;
- Define the behavioral components or activities for each of the four basic tasks: planning, organizing, leading, and controlling.

EFFECTIVE BUSINESS WRITING SKILLS
Date: June 22-23, 2004 Time: 8:30 am - 5:00 pm Fee: P8,500.00

- Identify characteristics of effective letters, memos and reports;
- *Organize and present facts and ideas clearly;*
- *Identify flaws and common errors in writing;*
- *Demonstrate their understanding of writing principles through analyzing and improving letters, memos and reports; and*
- *Enhance their writing skills in preparing business letters and memos.*

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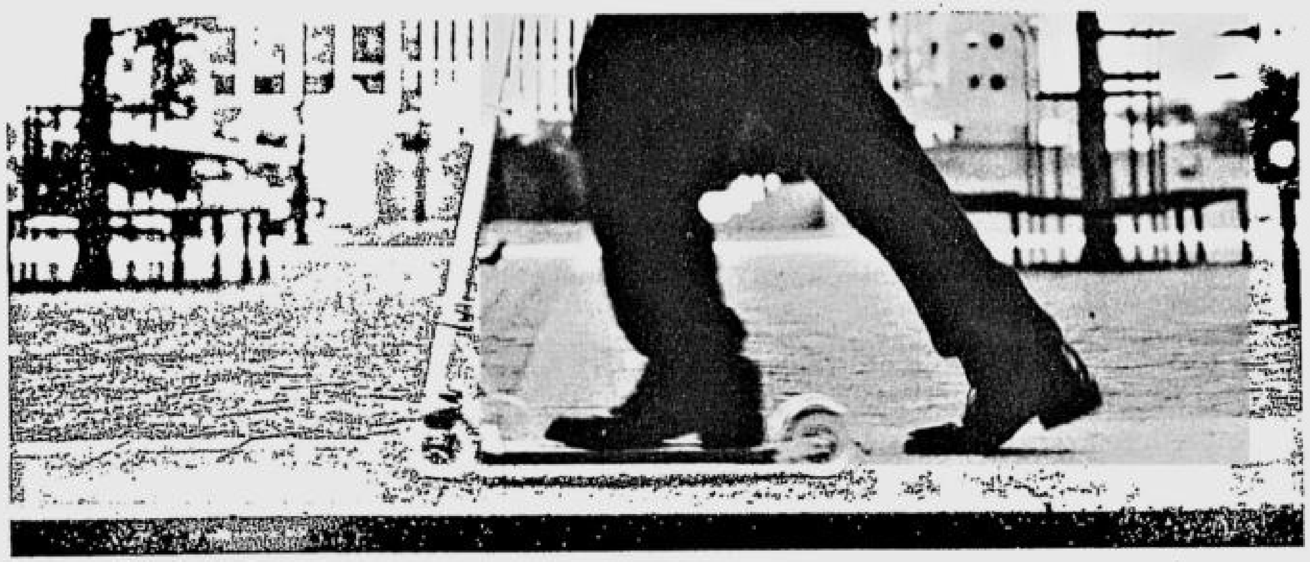

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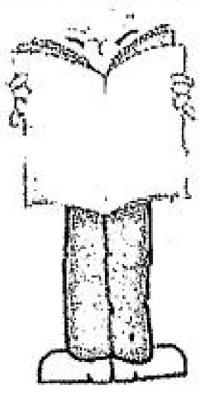

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Ali 4	STARSKY & HUTCH
Ali 5	THE WHOLE TEN YARDS
Ali 6	SCHOOL OF ROCK
Ali 7	MAN ON FIRE

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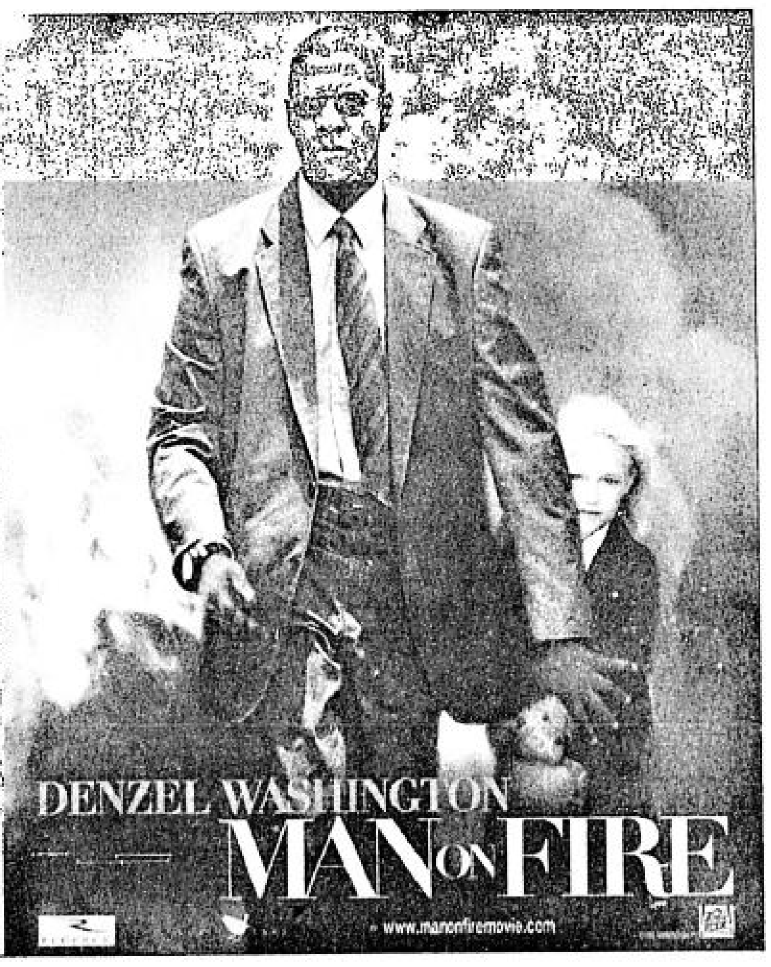

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Cinema	Movie	Schedule
CINEMA 1 THX	HELLBOY	11:20, 1:55, 4:30, 7:05, 9:40
2	SCHOOL OF ROCK	10.35, 12.50, 3.05, 5.20, 7.35, 9.50
3	MAN OF FIRE	10.15, 1.10, 4.05, 7.00, 9.55
4	PAYCHECK	12.55, 3.25, 5.55, 8.25, 10.30
5	STARSKY AND HUTCH	10.35, 12.50, 3.05, 5.20, 7.35, 9.50
6	SPARTAN	12.40, 3.00, 5.20, 7.40, 10.00
7	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB	12.20, 2.25, 4.30, 6.35, 8.40, 10.30
8	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST	12.10, 2.45, 5.15, 7.35, 9.55
9	THE WHOLE TEN YARDS	10.35, 12.50, 3.05, 5.20, 7.35, 9.50
10	HAUNTED SPIRIT	12.20, 2.25, 4.30, 6.35, 8.40, 10.30

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ERMITA 526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

Cinema	Movie	Schedule
1	HELLBOY	11:00, 1:35, 4:10, 6:45, 9:40
2	HAUNTED SPIRIT	11.15, 1.05, 2.55, 4.45, 6.35, 8.25, 10.00
3	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB	10.50, 1.00, 3.10, 5.20, 7.30, 9.40
4	MAN ON FIRE	10.10, 1.00, 3.50, 6.40, 9.50
5	SCHOOL OF ROCK	10.50, 1.00, 3.10, 5.20, 7.30, 9.40
6	STARSKY AND HUTCH	10.10, 12.25, 2.40, 4.55, 7.10, 9.40
7	THE WHOLE TEN YARDS	10.30, 12.25, 2.20, 4.15, 6.10, 8.05, 10.00

Big R Supercenter METRO EAST 682-8193/99 / 682-8280

Cinema	Movie	Schedule
1	THE WHOLE TEN YARDS	11.50, 2.10, 4.30, 6.50, 9.10
2	MAN ON FIRE	12.00, 3:00, 6.00, 9.00
3	TAKING LIVES	10.40, 12.50, 3.00, 5.10, 7.20, 9.30
4	STARSKY AND HUTCH	12.30, 3.00, 5.30, 8.00, 10.30
5	HELLBOY	10.05, 12.05, 2.15, 4.25, 6.40, 9.00
6	SCHOOL OF ROCK	10.05, 12.05, 2.15, 4.25, 6.40, 9.00
7	PAYCHECK	10.10, 12.20, 2.30, 4.40, 6.50, 9.10
8	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB	11.00, 1.00, 3.00, 5.00, 7.00, 9.00

Big R Supercenter NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW 935-3229 / 31

Cinema	Movie	Schedule
1	SCHOOL OF ROCK	11.35, 1.40, 3.45, 5.50, 8.10
2	HELLBOY	11:45, 1.55, 4.05, 6.15, 8.30
3	STARSKY AND HUTCH	11.35, 1.40, 3.45, 5.50, 8.10
4	MAN ON FIRE	11.45, 2.35, 5.25, 8.30
5	THE WHOLE TEN YARDS	12.00, 2.00, 4.00, 6.00, 8.10
6	HAUNTED SPIRIT	12.00, 2.00, 4.00, 6.00, 8.10
7	PAYCHECK	10.20, 12.45, 3.10, 5.35, 8.10
8	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB	11.35, 1.40, 3.45, 5.50, 8.10

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Cinema	Movie
1	MAN OF FIRE
2	STARSKY AND HUTCH
3	SCHOOL OF ROCK
4	ANIMAL

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Cinema	Movie
1	MAN OF FIRE
2	SCHOOL OF ROCK
3	ANIMAL
4	STARSKY AND HUTCH

Big R Supercenter STA. ROSA Laguna (049)837-0907

Cinema	Movie
1	HELLBOY
2	STARSKY AND HUTCH
3	ANIMAL
4	THE UNINVITED
5	MAN ON FIRE

Big R Supercenter LIPA 757-3664 / 312-5870

Cinema	Movie
1	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2	THE UNINVITED
3	TWISTED
4	CHECK-INN
5	HELLBOY

Big R Supercenter DASMARIÑAS 852-2125

Cinema	Movie
1	MAN OF FIRE
2	KARIBAL
3	STARSKY AND HUTCH
4	PETER PAN
5	HELLBOY

Big R Supercenter STARMILLS San Fernando, Pampanga 875-1927 / 961-5270

Cinema	Movie
1	PETER PAN
2	CHECK-INN
3	THE MISSING
4	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
5	STARSKY AND HUTCH
6 THX	HELLBOY

IMUS 471-8188 / 875-5858

Cinema	Movie
1	HELLBOY
2	THE WHOLE TEN YARDS
3	STARSKY AND HUTCH
4	MAN ON FIRE
5	SCHOOL OF ROCK
6	ANIMAL

BACOLOD 441-0458/59

Cinema	Movie
1	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
2	PETER PAN
3	PAYCHECK
4	HOUSE OF THE DEAD
5	MASIKIP SA DIBDIB
6	50 FIRST DATES

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Cinema	Movie
1	PAYCHECK
2	PETER PAN
3	THE HIGHWAYMEN
4	THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
5	SUROM
6	THE GRUDGE 2

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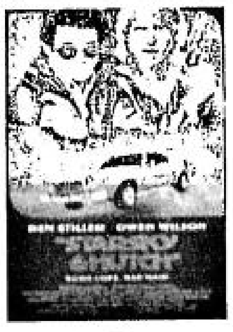

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First Filipino expedition to Mt. Everest launched

BEFORE Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay successfully climbed Mt. Everest in 1953, they thought it would be unlikely that anyone else would make another attempt. They were wrong of course as many others followed suit. Now it's the Filipinos' turn to beat their tracks with the 1st Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition.

The first Filipino ascent to the Everest will be undertaken in May of 2007. The plan, however, has already been generating a lot of excitement within local mountaineering circles since a group of mountain climbers associated with Usec. Art Valdez of the Department of Transportation and Communication actually pursued the idea a year ago. Valdez said it is every mountaineer's dream to scale the highest mountain in the world or at least organize an expedition for the task. Ever prepared for any challenges, Valdez noted that his job is to make sure they succeed.

After listing the Mt. Everest Expedition as a foundation with the Securities and Exchange Commission last December, the team of Valdez immediately earned the support of a number of private proponents like Uniglobe Travelwear Company Inc (UTCI), the exclusive distributor of The North Face mountaineering gear, a world-renowned brand used by the best and most serious mountain climbers in the world. Valdez said that the strategic support given by The North Face to the climb as part of the brand's global campaign: "Never Stop Exploring" literally set the expedition off to a great start. He is confident that other private organizations, and even government agencies, will also support their cause the way The North Face did.

Twenty-nine team members, including three women, have been selected to undergo a series of training in alpine climbing. Expedition spokesman and Mountaineering Federation of the Philippines Inc (MFPI) president Regie Pablo explained that this is just part of the preparation for the Everest climb, which would entail the team to go out of the country four times a year to do alpine climbing. He noted that the final seven who will ascend up to the summit of Mt. Everest would never be known until the latter part of 2006 when their preparatory climbs are over. Those who will comprise the so-called summiteers will be chosen based on a rigorous set of physical and psychological criteria.

The 1st Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition organizers are aiming for the final team to be composed of five men and two women. This would make the expedition not only put the first Filipino on top of the world's highest peak but also the first woman from Southeast Asia. They also hope the pioneering climb would capture the public imagination and boost the Filipino morale in the same way that Olympic winners do.

MEDICARD INAUGURATES FESTIVAL SUPER MALL CLINIC

Medicard opens its second mall-based satellite clinic at Festival Super Mall in Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa, to give its members in the south of the Metro more ease and convenience with their medical related concerns. The new satellite clinic, like its predecessor at the SM North Edsa, offers a wide range of specialty consultation services, various laboratory procedures, annual physical exam, and even pre-employment exam services. It is open daily from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Shown are the inaugural ribbon cutting guests (from left) Dr. Magdalena Meana (representing Muntinlupa Mayor Jaime Fresnedi), Rep. Rozzano Rufino Blazon, Pops Fernandez with Medicard's Dr. Nicanor Montoya (president) and Luis Montoya (EVP and GM).

Don Bosco takes a leap on its 51st year

DON BOSCO Technical College (DBTC) in Mandaluyong City celebrates its 51st year of commitment to produce professionals in the field of technology. For years, it has maintained its exclusive status, focusing on educating and training young men to become exemplars of professionalism, nationalism, civic consciousness, and Christian living. This school year, DBTC takes a bold step as it welcomes young women to experience Bosconian education.

A Statement to the World - Don Bosco Technical College aims to give women an equal opportunity to empower themselves with the quality of education that Don Bosco offers and to revolutionize Bosconian education... fostering the maturing process of the young generation through mutual interaction.

Breaking the tradition of exclusivity, Don Bosco takes a leap in creating a new generation of Bosconians who recognize the equal dignity of men and women in Philippine society.

A New Goal - As one of the leading schools in science and technology, Don Bosco Technical College has received numerous grants from government and non-government organizations to further improve its capability to educate young people in the field of engineering and technology. With the accomplishments and support from different agencies, Don Bosco Technical College envisions a new goal of becoming a science and technology university by the year 2020.

In line with this vision, Don Bosco now offers the following new courses for the coming school year: Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship - wherein students will learn the fundamentals of managing technology-oriented enterprises to become a part of the Philippine industry's backbone... creating individual wealth while adding value to our society; and Associate in Computer Technology - a ladderized program leading to B.S. in Information Technology.

The changes that Don Bosco Technical College currently undertakes signifies a renewed thrust towards development, an answer to society's demand for benchmarks in the field of technology, professionals molded to become servant leaders who care and promote justice in our society.

PSLIS HOLDS SEMINAR-WORKSHOP

The Philippine Society of Librarians and Information Specialists (PSLIS) recently held its seminar-workshop last March 17 to 19 at the 12th Floor of Securities and Exchange Commission Building in Edsa, Mandaluyong City. The theme of the seminar is 'Developing/Enhancing the Cataloguing and Indexing Skills of Librarians, Non-Librarians and Othe Library Personnel/Information Specialists'. Shown the participants and officers of PSLIS.

FORMER MFI SCHOLAR AT 'DAMAYAN'

Amelia Lourdes (Amylou) Serrano-Geluz (right), listens to questions by Ms Rosa Rosal host of 'Damayan' program over NBN-Channel 4 during a live interview held recently. An active scholar during her training years with Meralco Foundation Institute (MFI), Amylou is presently employed as branch representative of Meralco's Bacoor, Cavite office where she applies her training in industrial electrical technology at MFI. With her is MFI president, Col. Alex Escaño, who explained the requirements in applying for scholarship at MFI.

Goldilocks

THE WINE AND CAKE DUO

Carlo Rossi, a premium California wine, recently inked an agreement with Goldilocks Bakeshop to offer a special promo dubbed, Carlo Rossi All-Occasion Packs. Shown in photo during the contract signing are (center) Von Hizon, managing director for international brands of The Andresons Group, exclusive distributor of Carlo Rossi; together with (from left) Goldilocks Bakeshop's Ervy Epistola, local store marketing manager and Sali Sauco, marketing manager - BS. Witnessing the affair were (standing) Llyod Dizon, The Andresons Group's product manager for Gallo Wines and Sochie Cervantes, Goldilocks' marketing officer.

METROBANK FOUNDATION BAGS AGORA AWARD

Metrobank Foundation, the philantrophic arm of Metrobank, recently made history when it bagged the first Agora Award for Advocacy Marketing of the Philippine Marketing Association. As the first corporate foundation to receive the award in 24 years and the first winner in the category, the foundation was recognized for raising the bar in advocacy marketing of the country's social development efforts. Photo shows (from left) Metrobank Foundation EVP Elvira Ong Chan, president Placido Mapa Jr., and PMA president Dr. Leonardo Garcia Jr.

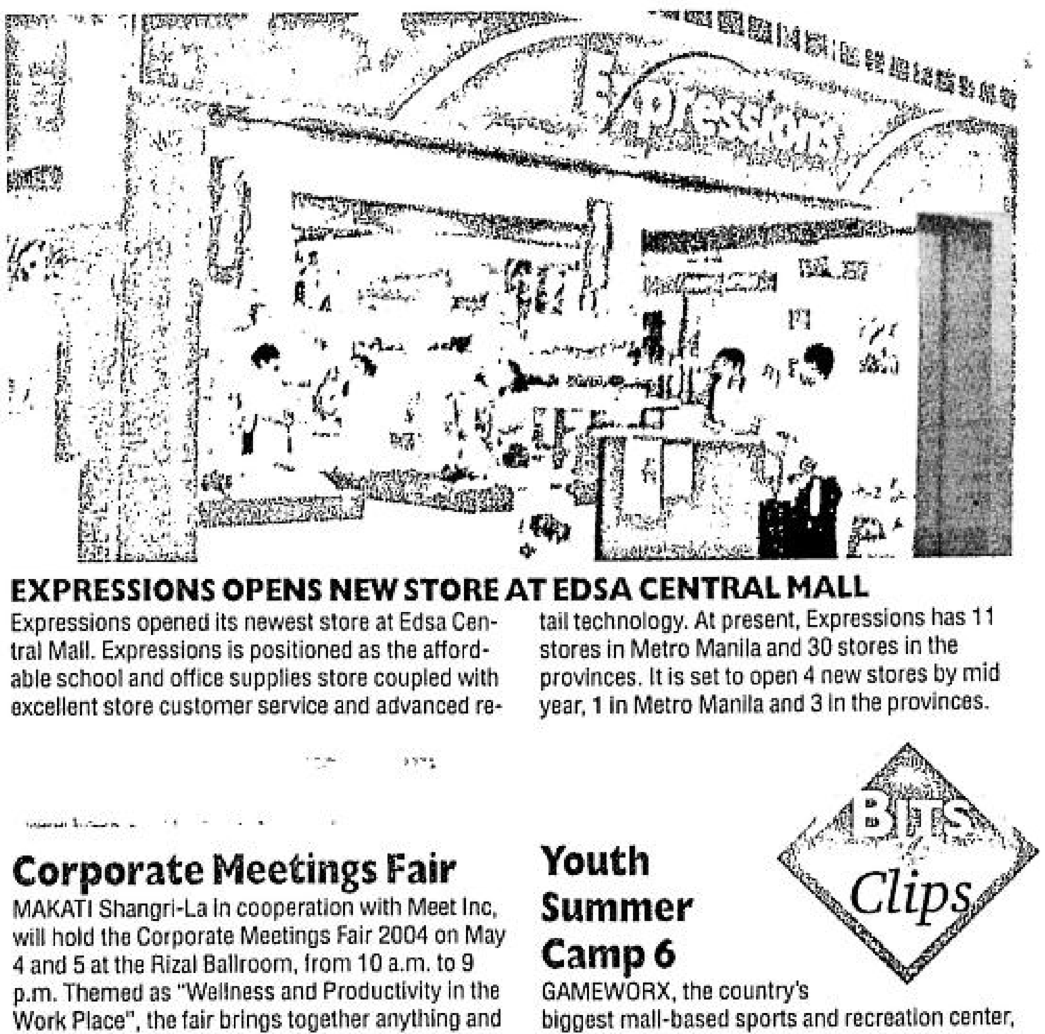
Imation expands optical media portfolio

IMATION Corp, a worldwide leader in removable data storage media, announced the availability of new high-speed 4x DVD+R/RW and 4x DVD-R. These new formats make backup procedures easier to perform for small business owners and consumers who operate in today's high-capacity computing environment.

"By expanding our line of optical media with faster speeds, we are able to provide users with the fastest storage solutions they need to better manage and store their digital information, while providing the highest degree of reliability and protection for that content," said Nancy Tan, managing director, Imation South Asia Region.

With the ability to provide speeds of up to 44 megabits per second, Imation's new 4x DVD media has the ability to record its full 4.7GB capacity - about the total content contained in a stack of books piled nearly 50 yards high - in less than 15 minutes. Imation's new higher speed DVDs are ideal for archival, storage and retrieval of high-capacity data files such as photos and videos as well as PC or network backups in home and business environments. Features you can enjoy are rewritable format that allows 1000 rewrite cycles, two-way compatibility between DVD video discs and players with DVD+RW discs and recorders, holds seven times more data than a full size CD-R, outstanding picture quality and long archival life.

Imation's new high-speed DVD discs are currently available in the US and worldwide, with additional packaging configurations. For more information on Imation's full line of optical products, visit www.imation-southasia.com.



EXPRESSIONS OPENS NEW STORE AT EDSA CENTRAL MALL

Expressions opened its newest store at Edsa Central Mall. Expressions is positioned as the affordable school and office supplies store coupled with excellent store customer service and advanced retail technology. At present, Expressions has 11 stores in Metro Manila and 30 stores in the provinces. It is set to open 4 new stores by mid year, 1 in Metro Manila and 3 in the provinces.

PULSE HEAT DANCE BEAT

Pulse, the newest fragrance from Axe hits the campus as it launches the ultimate Dance Party Showdown - Pulse Heat Dance Beat. More than 30 schools participated in this Inter University Street Dancing Competition which features the latest dance craze from Axe Pulse, 'Make Love'. The well-attended event took place last April 17, at Pier 1 in Fort Bonifacio Global City.

BITS Clips

Bee Matched n' Win promo

GET ready to win great prizes and cool treats with the return of the Bee Matched n' Win Part 2, summer's hippest promo from Jollibee and Nestea. Every purchase of any Jollibee Breakfast Meals, Langhap Sarap Value Meals, or Jollibee Kiddie Meal with Nestea Ice Tea entitles you to get one scratch card. Scratch the first two boxes, which should match to complete the drawing of the prize to be won. You can win instant prizes. Scratch the 3rd box to reveal the code for your electronic raffle for chance to win in the weekly and monthly draws. To join the electronic raffle, customers must register their mobile number and their first E-raffle code by texting GO NESTEA <space> E-raffle code indicated on the scratch card <space> NAME <space> ADDRESS and send to 2929. Customers may only register once but may send as many E-raffle codes as possible. The more E-raffle codes you send, the more chances of winning. The Bee Matched n' Win promo is from April 23 to June 23. Weekly raffle draws will be held every Monday, which started May 3, while the grand monthly draws will be on May 25 and June 25.

Corporate Meetings Fair

MAKATI Shangri-La in cooperation with Meet Inc, will hold the Corporate Meetings Fair 2004 on May 4 and 5 at the Rizal Ballroom, from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Themed as "Wellness and Productivity in the Work Place", the fair brings together anything and everything that a client needs for a successful conference and convention. Interested parties may contact Bernni Concepcion of Meet Inc at (632)436-6580, or meet@ibahn.net. You may also contact Makati Shangri-La's events management department at (632)813-8888 ext. 7476.

Summer Art Workshop

SUMMER Art Workshop for children (3 to 9 years old) and adults (10 and above) will be held from May 6 to 31 at the Positivism Art Gallery at Enterprise Plaza, 1429 Pablo Ocampo St. (formerly Vito Cruz Extn.) Brgy. San Antonio, Makati City. The program is composed of 7 sessions, twice a week every Monday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. To conduct the summer workshop is positivism exponent E.R. Tagle and his artist-friends. For inquiries, call 899-6358 or 0927-552-2288.

Youth Summer Camp 6

GAMEWORX, the country's biggest mall-based sports and recreation center, offers the coolest youth summer camp in town. Now on its 6th year, this event is open for kids from 5 to 25 years old. It offers courses in bowling, billiards and hockey. This year, a modeling course has been added. Participants may enlist on the schedule of their choice: May 3 to 7 for the first batch, and May 17 - 21 for the second batch. Bowling course fee is P1,500. For Billiards, it is P1,000. The Hockey course also amounts to P1,000. Modeling lessons costs P1,500. All fees are inclusive of the instructor's fee, one commemorative shirt, a certificate of completion and snacks. The Gameworx Youth Summer Camp 6 is presented by Pepsi. Registration is ongoing. For inquiries, call 850-35-55 to 58 or 850-3551. You may also visit www.gameworx.com. GameworX is located at 4th Level, Festival Supermall, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

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MARA PAWNSHOP BR of 2230 M. Roxas St. Sta Ana Manila Auction Sale on May 10, 2004 Mon.at 2:30 in the afternoon. Respectively, Dec 8 - Jan. 10, 2004 - SONS of J. LANUZA, Auctioneer. (PDI-May 4, 2004)

PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

MARA PAWNSHOP I, II, III, IV and Comembo Br. of Makati City. AUCTION SALE on May 10, 2004 Mon. at 10:30, 11:00, 12:30, 1:30 and 8:30 in the morning and on the afternoon, respectively, Dec. 08 - Jan. 10, 2004. - SONS OF J. LANUZA, Auctioneer. (PDI-May 4, 2004)

MI MARA Pawnshop of 251 Quirino Ave. Baclaran P'que. M. M AUCTION SALE on May 10, 2004 Mon. at 4:00 in the afternoon. Respectively, Dec. 8, 2003 - Jan. 10. 2004. Sons of J. Lanuza, Auctioneer (PDI- May 4, 2004)

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given of the estate of the late EUFRONIO DE LEON was extrajudicially settled and sold among and by the heirs as per Doc 229 Page 46 Book VIII Series 2004 before Notary Public Atty. Lourdes T. Pagayatan of Quezon City. (PDI - May 4, 11 & 18, 2004)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ESTATE OF THE LATE PLAMA B. LIGUTAN HAS BEEN EXTRAJUDICIALLY SETTLED BY HER HEIRS AS PER DOC NO. 294; PAGE NO. 60; BOOK NO. I; SERIES OF 2004 BY PORFIRIO M. BAUTISTA NOTARY PUBLIC OF PARANAQUE CITY (PDI-MAY 4, 11 & 18, 2004)

NOTICE OF LOSS

29,645 Globe Mackay shares with Certificate No. 56343 registered In the name of of Elaine O. Herboso and/or Ma. Elena Sanchez ITF Ongpin Children have been lost. If no contest is received, new certificate will be issued.(PDI-May 4, 11 & 18, 2004)

500 SPI Technologies Inc. shares with Certificate No. B-4895 registered in the name of Maria Isabel L. Ongpin have been lost. If no contest is received, new certificate will be issued. (PDI-May 4, 11 & 18, 2004)

Notice is given of lost Dealers Confirmation Cert. issued 6/1/99 consist of 1 engine 4BCI-118347 sold to Power Supply & Well Management Company purchased at Kallraya Coml Co. w/ sales Invoice 18893 on 5/29/99. (PDI-May 4,2004)

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SUGAR REGULATORY ADMINISTRATION
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INVITATION TO NEGOTIATE

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) through its Bidding and Awards Committee (BAC) invites interested parties to negotiate thru sealed offer for the supply of the following items to be delivered to **SILAY-HPCO**, as follows:

PROJECT 1 - UPGRADING OF MILL EQUIPMENT - INSTALLATION OF CANE SHREDDER

		APPROVED BUDGET
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LOT 2	Upgrade of Turbodyne Gearbox, Engineering Equipment and Commissioning	3,900,000.00
LOT 3	Feed Drum Gear Reducer	800,000.00
LOT 4	Heavy Duty Shredder Rotor Including Shaft, Hubs, Pivot Pins, 2 sets Swinging Hammers and Bearings	4,560,000.00
	Approved Budget for the Contract	**Php10,960,000.00**

Request for Quotation shall be issued by the SRA Bidding Secretariat from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. starting May 4, 2004, for a non-refundable fee of Php 500.00

Deadline for submission of sealed offers shall be on May 17, 2004.

For particulars, please contact:
The Bidding Secretariat - Telephone No. 929-6837

The SRA reserves the right to reject any or all offers, waive any defect or informality therein or accept any offer(s) which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to the government.

(Sgd.) **JAMES C. LEDESMA**
Administrator

(PDI - May 4, 2004)

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Lyceum of the Philippines, Inc. Notice of Loss of Stock Certificates. The public is hereby informed of the loss of Stock Cert. Nos. 9, 10, 370, 453, 454, 473, 514, 674, 1836 and 1837 issued in the names of Victor A. Arches and/or Minda N. Arches. If no contest is presented in the Corporation regarding the above-mentioned stock certificates within one year from this notice, the right to contest shall be barred, and the corporation shall issue new certificates in lieu of the lost ones subject to and in accordance with provisions of Section 73 of the Corporation Code. (PDI-May 4, 11 & 18, 2004)

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Our Dearly Beloved Daddy

P/MAJOR JESUS ALVIZ SONGCO (Ret.) INP-WPD

Peacefully joined his Creator on May 1, 2004 at the age of 85.

His loving wife **Carmen**; children **Evelyn**, **Antonio** (†), **Manuel** (†), **Eduardo & Carmelo**; daughters-in-law **Carmen & Noemi**; grandchildren **Pao & Ena**; **Anna**, **Tricia & Nicole**; great grandchild **Baby Hans**; other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel 12A, 3rd Floor, New Bldg., La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Thursday, May 6, 2004 at The Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, Project 6, Quezon City.

Psalm 16:10-11

"For You will not leave my soul among the dead
or allow your Godly one to rot in the grave.
You will show me the way of life granting me
the joy of your presence and the pleasures of
living with you forever."

RICARDO MARTIN BARREDO, JR.

AUGUST 20, 1929 - MAY 2, 2004

He is survived by his wife **Milagros**, children **Ditas/Mercy** (deceased) & **Rey Navalta**; **Ricky & Ping Barredo**; **Maris/May**; **Tuesday** and **Alan Alajas**; grandchildren **Adjani**, **Jimbo**, **Colleen**, **Derrick**, **Gabriel**, **Audrey** and sole surviving sister **Solita**.

His body lies in state at Funeraria Nacional, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment is at La Loma Cemetery on May 6, 2004 after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the Holy Redeemer Church.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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ROSARIO MAGALLANES DINOSO

Died peacefully on May 2, 2004 at the age of 89.

Her loving children **Nick** (†), **Luming**, **Pio Jr.**, **Cora**, **Tony**, **Zeny**, **Tess**, **Manuel**, **Jaime**; daughters and sons-in-law **Diana**, **Pete del Rosario**, **Fely** (†); grandchildren and other relatives request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Chapel, Marikina City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, May 5, 2004 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 4:00 p.m. Mass.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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No. 67 Pasig Boulevard Extension, Pasig City;
Tels. 641-7909; 641-1735
M. Almeda St., Pateros, Metro Manila;
Tels. 642-3010; 633-3602
FUNERARIA FILIPINAS
187 Real St., Zapote Alabang, Las Piñas;
Tels. 873-0507; 873-0024
FUNERARIA FILIPINAS
865 J.P. Rizal St., Poblacion, Makati City;
Tels. 890-3556; 899-8191
FUNERARIA TUASON
Poblacion, San Miguel, Bulacan 3011;
Tels. (044) 764-0281; 678-0266; (0917) 895-0603
FUNERARIA SAMSON
145 Bayan Luma, Imus, Cavite;
Tels. (046) 471-3375; 471-2675
GARDEN OF MEMORIES MEMORIAL PARK
Calsadang Bago, Pateros, Metro Manila;
Tels 642-6181 to 82
HERITAGE PARK
Bayani Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Tels. (DL) 845-2341 to 42;
(TL) 845-2334 to 38 loc. 110/112
HOLY GARDENS MEMORIAL PARK
Third Level, Unishoppe Complex,
Quezon Ave., Angono, Rizal
Tels. 651-1711; 651-0737
HOLY TRINITY MEMORIAL CHAPELS
Dr A. Santos Ave., Sucat Rd., Sucat, Parañaque City;
Tels 825-1296; 825-1291, Telefax 825-1314
LA FUNERARIA LAWRENCE BAQUIRAN
#27 Crisologo St., Vigan, Ilocos Sur;
Tel. 722-2730; Cell (0917) 5680136; (0917) 5680145
Manila #23 Pato St., Project 2, Quezon City; Tel. 434-3258
LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
1501 C M. Recto Ave. cor. T. Mapua, Manila;
Tels. 711-6931 to 35; 732-4795; 732-2827

LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
143 G. Araneta Ave. cor. Kaliraya St., Quezon City
Tels. 749-3806 to 11; 712-3001; 743-6502 or 05
LA FUNERARIA PAZ, SUCAT, INC.
Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat, Parañaque;
Tels. 820-1592; 825-9947; 825-8635
LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
79 Naguilian Rd., Baguio City;
Tel. (074) 443-3337; (074) 442-3117
LA FUNERARIA SAPINOSO
G. Tirona St., Imus, Cavite;
Tels. (046) 471-3386; (046) 471-4417; (046) 571-1978
LINCOLN MEMORIAL SERVICES, INC.
Ground Floor, JEMP Bldg., J. Cabarrus cor.
Monserrat Sts., Phase I,
BF Commercial Center, Parañaque, Metro Manila
LOYOLA MEMORIAL CHAPELS
EDSA cor. Bernardino St.,
Guadalupe, Makati City;
Tels 895-1011 to 19
LOYOLA MEMORIAL PARK CHAPELS & CREMATORY SERVICES
Loyola Memorial Park, A. Bonifacio Avenue,
Tañong, Marikina City
Tels. 941-3196 to 98; 941-3676; Telefax 941-3577
MALABED FUNERAL SERVICE
3-A Coronado St., Guadalupe Viejo, Makati City
Tel. 890-63-18
MARIAN MEMORIAL CHAPELS
Marcos Hiway, Antipolo, Rizal, Tels 645-1855
MARCELO FUNERAL HOMES
Tels 283-1613, 273-8922
MT. SINAI MEMORIAL CHAPEL
Arellano St., Dagupan City;
Tels. (075) 515-5960, 522-8783; (0917) 520-6001
NACIONAL MEMORIAL HOMES
264 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City;
Tels. 713-5231 to 35; 714-0867; 714-0868
OLONGAPO MEMORIAL PARK
Del Rosario St., Tabacuhan, Sta Rita, Olongapo
Tel. No (047) 223-1692
OUR LADY OF PEACE MEMORIAL PARK CHAPEL & SERVICES, INC.
No. 6 Cangma St., Antipolo City 1870
Tel. No. 697-0782; 697-0026,
650-7426; Fax : 697-2764

PAKET SANTIAGO MEMORIAL HOMES
13 V. Gomez St., San Roque, Marikina City;
Tels 646-1725; 646-1730
POPULAR MEMORIAL CHAPELS, INC.
2141 Rizal Ave., Sta Cruz, Manila;
Tel Nos 254-0867, 254-0839
PRIME MEMORIAL CHAPELS
200 Commonwealth Ave., Quezon City;
Tels 427-8412; 4278403
ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Ground Flr. Rolling Hills Chapel, 27th-Lacson St.,
Mandalagan, Bacolod City. Tel. 433-7132
RIZAL FUNERAL HOMES
438 Cementina St., Pasay City;
Tels. 831-1204
Sucat Branch: 8187 Dr. A. Santos Ave.,
Sucat, Parañaque City
Tels. 826-1376, 826-9682, (0915) 712-1220
SANTUARIO DE SAN ANTONIO PARISH
Forbes Park, Makati City;
Tel Nos 843-8838/30; Fax No 843-9223
SANTUARIO DE SAN JOSE PARISH
East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City;
Telefax 724-4139; 725-2044
ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGOURI PARISH
Magallanes Village, Makati City;
Tels 852-8228 852-7284
ST. MARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL
16-15 G. Tuazon cor. Loreto St., Sampaloc, Manila;
Tels 749-3679, 781-1772
ST. PETER FUNERAL HOMES
296 Quezon Ave., Quezon City
Tels 372-5084, 410-9286/87
UNIVERSAL FUNERAL SERVICE & MEMORIAL CHAPELS
2028 Rizal Ave., Sta. Cruz, Manila,
Tels 493-4458, 493-4540
VERONICA MEMORIAL HOMES
Official NBI Morgue 517-A Arnaiz St., Pasay City;
Tels 831-3797, 844-7846, 843-1801; 845-4836
WELINGTON FUNERAL SERVICES
1511 Gen Luna St., Paco, Manila, Tel 302-5447
ZUASOLA FUNERAL HOMES
Brgy Del Remedio, San Pablo City, Laguna
Tels. (049) 562-1668; 800-2914
Cel. No. (0917) 5016963

CLASSIFIEDS

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Social Welfare and Development
Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills
Quezon City
Telephone No. 931-8101 to 07

KALAHI-CIDSS PROJECT

Loan No 7147

REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (WB-IBRD) towards the cost of KALAHI-CIDSS Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to eligible payments under the contract for which this request for quotation is issued.
2. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), hereinafter referred to as the Purchaser, hereby invites interested bidders to submit a fixed quotation for the following items
   a. RFQ NO KALAHI-CIDSS/04-DSWD-002
      1. 15 units Dekstop Computers
      2. 15 units Uninterruptible Power Supply
      3. 9 units Mobile Printer
      4. 19 units Laser Printer
      5. 32 units Software
   b. RFQ NO. KALAHI-CIDSS/04-DSWD-003
      1. 1 unit Firewall Appliance
      2. 1 set KVM Switch
      3. 1 set Server Rack Mount Cabinet
      4. 1 unit HUB Rack Mount Cabinet
3. A complete set of bidding document for RFQ NO KALAHI-CIDSS/04-DSWD-002 may be obtained upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ONE THOUSAND PESOS (Php1,000.00) and upon submission of a Letter of Intent addressed to the undersigned at the address given below
4. A complete set of bidding document for RFQ NO KALAHI-CIDSS/04-DSWD-003 may be obtained for free upon submission of a Letter of Intent addressed to the undersigned at the address given below
5. Pre-Bid Conference for both Procurements will be conducted on May 12, 2004 at 10 00 in the morning at the DSWD Administrative Conference Room, 2nd floor DSWD, Batasan Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City.
6. Opening of sealed quotations for RFQ NO. KALAHI-CIDSS/04-DSWD-002 will be on May 19, 2004 at 1 00 in the afternoon at the address given below
7. Opening of sealed quotations for RFQ NO KALAHI-CIDSS/04-DSWD-003 will be on May 19, 2004 at 3 00 in the afternoon at the address given below.
8. Should you require clarification on this Request for Quotation, please notify the Purchaser in writing at the address below:

Chairperson
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Department of Social Welfare and Development
Batasan Complex, Constitution Hills
Quezon City, Philippines
Tel/Fax No.: 951-7116

(Sgd) RHODA F. YAP
Assistant Secretary &
Chairperson, Bids & Awards Committee-I

(PDI - May 4, 2004)

NOTICE

THE FIRST PHILIPPINE DRAGON CUP

A Dragonboat Racing Competition
To be held at The Baywalk Area, Roxas Boulevard
Will be held on MAY 15 (SATURDAY) and MAY 16 (SUNDAY)
* This notice was issued with regards to the adjustments made to the dates previously announced.

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Cebu
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Cebu Capitol, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Provincial Government of Cebu, thru its BIDS and AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC), invites all interested manufacturers, suppliers, dealers and/or distributors to apply for eligibility and to submit BIDS for the SUPPLY of various medical/laboratory/dental equipment requirements as follows:

	Items	Quantity	Budget	Requisitioner	Adv. No.
1.	Cardiac Monitor w/ Defibrillator	1 unit	P580,000.00	R.L. Maningo Mem. Hosp.	83
2.	Dental Chair w/ Accessories	1 unit	P274,610.00	I. Kintanar Mem. Hosp.	84
3.	Defibrillator w/ Monitor, etc.	1 unit	P770,000.00	I. Kintanar Mem. Hosp.	85
4.	Autoclave Machine	1 unit	P140,000.00	Oslob Dist. Hospital	86
5.	Clinical Chemistry	1 unit	P200,000.00	Danao Dist. Hospital	87
6.	ECG Machine - Portable	1 set	P200,000.00	Danao Dist. Hospital	87
7.	X-ray Machine w/ Accessories	1 unit	P1,650,000.00	Tuburan Dist. Hospital	88
8.	Anesthesia Machine w/ ventilator	1 unit	P2,100,000.00	Barili District Hospital	89
9.	Suction Machine - Heavy Duty	1 unit	P220,000.00	Tuburan Dist. Hospital	90
10.	Readacrit Hematocrit Centrifuge	1 unit	P100,000.00	Badian Dist. Hospital	91
11.	Autoclave (Steam Sterilizer)	1 unit	P410,000.00	Badian Dist. Hospital	91
12.	Delivery Table, Suction Pump, etc.	various	P824,000.00	Balamban Dist. Hospital	93

In order to qualify for participation in the public bidding, the bidders should conform to the eligibility criteria as prescribed under Section 23.6 of the approved IRR-A of Republic Act No. 9184.

Eligibility requirements and bid forms tender documents and request for quotation shall be available at the BAC Secretariat Provincial General Services Office, Dep-Ed Bldg., Capitol, Cebu City, within the government prescribed office hours, starting on Tuesday, **May 04, 2004** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Hundred Pesos Only (Php 100.00).

Pre-bid conference will be conducted on Friday, **May 14, 2004** at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon at the BAC conference room, Provincial General Services Office, Dep-Ed Building, Capitol, Cebu City.

Sealed envelopes containing the duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals shall be received by the BAC Secretariat at the above-mentioned address not later than 10:00 in the morning on Wednesday, **May 26, 2004** and shall be publicly opened thereafter.

All particulars relative to eligibility process, bidding, evaluation of bids, post-qualification and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR-A) of R.A. No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act.

The Bids and Awards Committee of the Province of Cebu reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defects or formality therein and to accept bids considered complying, responsive and most advantageous to the government.

For inquiry, please contact the Office of the BAC Secretariat at Telephone Nos 253-9614, 253-3995 & 416-6065.

Those requirements are posted at the BAC Bulletin Board, PGSO, Dep Ed Bldg., Capitol, Cebu City.

(Sgd.) **EDUARDO T. HABIN**
Chairman, BAC

(PDI - May 4 & 10, 2004)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region VII, Banilad, Cebu City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority (NFA), Region VII, Cebu City is inviting all interested vessel or barge owners/operators to apply for eligibility and to bid under the Letter Agreement for Vessel/Barge Hire for the shipment of rice from Cebu City to various destinations as indicated below:

VOLUME SCHEDULED FOR SEA DISPERSAL

Destination		No. of Lots	Quantity/ Lot (bags)	Freight Rate/Bag	Approved Budget for the Contract/Lot
Province	Port				
Bantayan Is.	Santa Fe	11	7,000	17 00	119,000 00
Camotes Is.	Poro	2	11,000	14 90	163,900 00
	Tudela	2	6,000	15 40	92,400 00
Bohol	Tagbilaran	4	18,000	18 30	329,400 00
		1	16,000	18 30	292,800 00
	Ubay	2	6,000	15 40	92,400 00
Negros Or.	Dumaguete	4	18,000	17 00	306,000 00
		1	28,000	17 00	476,000 00
Siquijor	Larena	1	15,000	17 00	255,000 00
N. Leyte	Tacloban	2	32,000	21 80	697,600 00
		2	25,000	21 80	545,000 00
		2	18,000	21 80	392 400 00
		1	17,000	21 80	370,600 00
	Ormoc	1	13,000	18 50	240,500 00
S. Leyte	Maasin	2	15,000	18 50	277,500.00
		1	17,000	18 50	314,500 00
E. Samar	Borongan	3	18,000	28 00	504,000 00
		2	13,000	28 00	364,000 00
	Guiuan	1	20,000	23 50	470,000 00
N. Samar	San Jose	2	30,000	22 20	666,000 00
		1	18,000	22 20	399,600 00
		1	17,000	22 20	377,400 00
W. Samar	Catbalogan	4	25,000	19 80	495,000 00
	Calbayog	1	13,000	19 80	257,400 00
		1	12,000	19 80	237,600 00
Maguindanao	Cotabato	2	25,000	25 50	637,500 00
		1	17,000	25 50	433,500 00

Summary of Bidding Procedures:

The Bidding shall be governed by RA 9184. A Single Stage Two Envelope System of evaluation will be adopted. Envelope A shall contain the eligibility requirements as specified in the Instruction to Bidders which will be evaluated in a non-discretionary "Pass" or "Fail" criteria. Only those who complied with all the requirements shall be declared "Eligible" and shall proceed to the next phase which is the opening of Envelope B, Envelope B shall contain the accomplished and signed Bid Form.

Bids will be ranked from lowest to highest on a per lot basis to determine the Lowest Calculated Bid. The bidder with the lowest calculated bid shall undergo post qualification by the Regional Bids and Awards Committee *(RBAC)* to verify, validate and ascertain statements made and documents submitted in the eligibility requirements. After which, the bidder shall be declared "Lowest Calculated Responsive Bid" and shall be recommended for awarding of the contract

Schedule of Activities:

Activity	Date	Time
Issuance of Bidding Documents	May 4-12, 2004	8 00 AM - 5 00 PM
Pre-Bidding Conference	May 14, 2004	9 00 AM
Submission & Opening of Bids	May 25, 2004	9.00 AM - 5 00 PM

Interested bidders may secure the bidding documents from the RBAC Secretariat, 2nd Floor, NFA, Region VII, Cebu City after payment of a non-transferable, non-refundable application fee of P5,000 00. Bidders or their authorized representatives are required to be present during the opening of sealed bids. For further inquiries, you may call the undersigned in the following numbers: (032) 232-1939 and (032) 232-6832.

The NFA reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any informality or defect found therein, and may accept bids which are deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd) **ANTONIO J. ADORABLE**
Assistant Regional Director/
RBAC Chairman

(PDI - May 4 & 10, 2004)

FIRST PRIVATE ISLAMIC BANK

Bankwise to get ₱1.7B in investment

By Michelle V. Remo

BENSON International Holdings will infuse P1.7 billion in the form of assets into the cash-strapped Bankwise Inc.

This will pave the way for the establishment of the country's first private Islamic Bank.

Benson International, which owns the restaurant chain Gloria Maris Food Corp. and is also engaged in real property business, said the P1.7 billion worth of capital was expected to help resuscitate the debt-saddled Bankwise.

Once the transfer of assets is completed, Bankwise will be transformed into an Islamic bank.

Benson International's legal chief Eladio Samson said the company saw bright prospects for the Islamic bank, which will serve the peculiar financial needs of the Muslim community in the country.

Banking for Muslims does not entail the concept of charging fixed interests on deposits, which is sinful according to Islamic teachings.

Muslim depositors are therefore not allowed to collect fixed interests from the money they deposited.

They are, however, allowed to place their money in an entity that will use the funds for investment. Muslim depositors will be given a share of the profit but they will also have to share with the losses.

The P1.7-billion infusion will give Benson International a majority stake in the bank, equivalent to 75 percent. The current majority owner Wise Holdings will become a minority shareholder.

"We expect the transfer of the assets to be completed in the next few days, and the Islamic bank will be fully operational by the third quarter," Samson told reporters. He added that the bank would hold a stockholders' meeting early next month where an election of new board members will be held.

Samson said the board was expected to elect Ibrahim Mamao as head of the new Islamic bank. Mamao was a director of the Amanah Savings Bank, a government-owned bank established during the Marcos regime. Mamao is currently the consultant for economic affairs of the Saudi Arabian embassy to the Philippines.

Samson said Benson International was set for the operations of the Islamic bank prior to the approval of the Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Although the law that allowed the establishment of the government-owned Amanah Bank was only specific for its operations, he said there was no law prohibiting the establishment of another Islamic Bank.

SSS to condone fines on overdue stock plan loans

THE SOCIAL Security System said it was willing to condone P233 million worth of penalties on delinquent stock investment loans.

The move is aimed at reactivating insipid accounts of the pension fund's members.

The SSS president and CEO Corazon dela Paz said in a statement yesterday that the pension fund had started processing amnesty applications. The amnesty period runs from Sept. 24, 2003 to Jan. 19, 2005.

"The program is intended to allow member-borrowers to settle their obligations and update their accounts. We call on about 25,000 borrowers with delinquent accounts to avail (themselves) of the condonation program," said De la Paz.

Aside from condoning penalties on delinquent stock investment loans, the program likewise allows borrowers to sell their shares to the SSS and the proceeds of the sale will serve as payment for their loans.

With the condonation program, De la Paz said the SSS hoped to encourage members to pay their loans that would enable the SSS to clean its books of bad loan accounts.

The SSS chief added that the funds to be generated from the program would be placed in various investment instruments and therefore provide additional revenue for the pension fund.

Those who have already paid their stock investment loans in full amount from Sept. 24, 2003 to Jan. 20, 2004 will be allowed to apply for refunds. *Michelle V. Remo*

Sugar prices stabilizing; NFA withdrawal from market seen

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

LORENZO

BACOLOD CITY—Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr. has instructed Sugar Regulatory Administrator James Ledesma to consult the farmers on the plan to stop the classification of "C" or reserve sugar and pave the way for the complete withdrawal of National Food Authority from the local sugar market.

Lorenzo issued the directive last week after discovering that NFA's buying price of sugar was less than prevailing market prices, which was more than P750 per 50-kilo bag (lkg).

Under the "C" Reserve Program, the NFA buys sugar from the farmers at P700 to P720 per lkg. The program started in March after prices of sugar dipped to about P640 per lkg.

Lorenzo said the NFA had bought 730,000 bags of sugar as of April 23, which was only 52 percent of the projected volume of 1.4 million bags. He also noted that the buying had slowed down considerably.

"The government's intervention worked and the recovery of sugar prices has practically eliminated the need for such intervention. Few farmers are now selling to NFA," Lorenzo said.

Ledesma said he had started consultations with the farmers and they seemed to favor putting an end to the classification of 20 percent of their sugar as "C."

"If the farmers agree, we will put an end to it by next week," he added.

By classifying their "C" sugar as "B" or domestic sugar, he said the farmers stand to get a higher price for it.

Ledesma reported that the sugar buying prices in Western Visayas ranged from P777 per lkg in Passi City, Iloilo and P760 per lkg in Bacolod, Lorenzo said.

"This is a considerable improvement from the prevailing prices of P640-P680 per lkg last February and a clear indication that all the interventions that President Macapagal-Arroyo approved were effective," Lorenzo said.

Ledesma also reported that this year may turn out to be a record year for sugar production which is projected to hit at least 2.2 million metric tons, up from last year's 2.16 million metric tons (mt).

Ledesma said that as of mid-April, production has reached almost 2 million metric tons, or 91 percent of target.

"This is the fourth consecutive year of production growth for the industry," Ledesma said.

Exports have also increased, while smuggling activities have been checked, Lorenzo said.

The Philippines is exporting 137,000 metric tons to the US and another 53,000 metric tons to other countries.

Railway project in Mindanao to start in Aug.

COTABATO CITY—The construction of the first phase of the Mindanao railway project will commence in August, a Malacañang official announced recently.

Virgilio Leyretana, deputy presidential assistant for Mindanao, said the construction of the project, which would connect the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, had received a $485-million fund from the German and Thai governments.

Leyretana said the Philippine National Railways had already turned over the feasibility study for the project.

The Mindanao Railway project has been in the drawing board for years now and the lack of fund had prevented the government from pursuing it.

Then Sen. Santanina Rasul said the railways would not only ease the movement of people from one place to another but would also boost the island's economy.

She noted that country's with extensive railway systems had proved that economic growth comes with the trains.

Leyretana, also director of the Mindanao Peace and Development Fund (MPDF), told reporters here that the first phase of the railway project would also cover the Misamis Oriental Export Processing Zone.

"This will open Mindanao to a whole new era of economic development and social transformation," Leyretana said. *Rosa-May V. de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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Rolls on April 26
Tour the entire Philippines in one sweep...
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Northern Luzon: Mla., Clark, SBMA, Iba, Hundred Is., Dagupan, Baguio, Sn. Fernando, Vigan, Laoag, Pagudpud, Tuguegarao, Banawe, Cabanatuan, Tarlac, Malolos, Manila

Second Leg: May 12 to May 25, 2004
Mla., Mindoro, Boracay, Kalibo, Iloilo, Bacolod, San Carlos, Dumaguete, Dapitan, Dipolog, Iligan, Cagayan de Oro, Malaybalay, Bukidnon, General Santos, Davao

Third Leg: May 27 to June 9, 2004
From Davao, Butuan, Surigao City, Maasin, Bohol, Cebu, Ormoc, Tacloban, Catbalogan, Sorsogon, Legaspi, Naga, Pagsanjan, Paete, Tanay, Angono, Mla.

(One may opt to join a Leg, a combination of Legs, or a segment of a Leg)

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The budgetary estimated cost to join is **as low** as an unbelievable **P800.00** per head per day, inclusive of **hotel accomodations**, **3 meals a day** budgeted at P150.00/day, and **average gas consumption**.

Sponsored by the Phil. Jaycees, Dept. of Tourism, Dept. of Transportation and Communications, Dept. of Trade and Industry, and Globe Handyphone.

Deadline for Registration is May 8, 2004. Hop-In and Biyahe Na!

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SEC asked to defer approval of NSC sale to Indian firm

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

A LANDOWNER claiming ownership of a parcel of land where the facilities of National Steel Corp. stand is asking the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to hold the approval of the steel company's asset sale.

In a manifestation addressed to SEC, lawyers of Teofilo Cacho asked the SEC to "hold in abeyance" the approval of NSC's liquidation plan until such time that the Quezon City Regional Trial Court rules on Cacho's complaint.

Cacho filed a case asking the trial court to issue a temporary restraining order on the sale of NSC's assets to India's Global Infrastructure Holdings Ltd.

A hearing is set for May 18.

Cacho claims to be the son and sole heir of the late Demetria Cacho in whose name the Supreme Court awarded two parcels of land in Iligan City where NSC's billet plant is located.

NSC suffered losses from its operations prompting it to shut down. It was placed under receivership and was slated for liquidation.

NSC and Global have agreed to extend for another 90 days the sale of NSC's assets.

SEC earlier said it has yet to approve the sale of the NSC assets to Global. This clarification was made in light of a recent petition to stop the sale of assets of the country's largest steel company. The SEC oversees the rehabilitation plan of NSC.

Cacho had asked the Quezon City Regional Trial Court to stop NSC from including his property from the sale.

Cacho said that the SEC-appointed liquidator had started negotiations for the sale and takeover of NSC's assets and liabilities by Global.

He argued that NSC did not pay rent on its steel plant's "long occupation" of his property in Iligan City.

Cacho further said the liquidator had no authority to include the property in the negotiations since he was not the owner of the land.

Last February 2002, Cacho's lawyers wrote NSC that he should be paid P220.83 million for the use of the property.

Life insurers seek cut in DST

LIFE insurance companies are asking the government to reduce the documentary stamp tax slapped on them by inserting a provision in the law's implementing rules and regulations.

The Philippine Life Insurance Association, in particular, is asking the Bureau of Internal Revenue to impose DST only on the first year of payment of an insurance premium, and not on the succeeding payments that will complete the cost of an insurance contract.

The proposal is expected to ease the tax liabilities of insurance firms and policy holders.

In a public hearing last week at the BIR, insurance companies said the DSTs on policies sold should only be collected once because the concept of the DST involves the collection of tax on a per-document basis (in this case, a document on insurance policy), and not on payments remitted periodically.

Since only one document is involved in the selling of an insurance policy, the PLIA said the DST should only be collected once. They suggested that the DST be imposed on the first year of payment of an insurance premium.

A BIR official, however, said the revenue agency was having doubts on the proposal, which will significantly trim down the revenue agency's DST collection.

Although the BIR is still in the process of reviewing the industry's request, the official said life insurance firms seemed to be asking too much from the government in proposing to cut the collection of DST on their premiums.

Considering that the newly passed DST law was already made to fit an earlier demand by the insurance industry, asking for another tax reduction mechanism could already hurt BIR's revenue-collection efforts

The newly issued Republic Act No. 9243 amended the way DST was imposed on insurance policies to favor the insurance firms. The law specifically shifted the basis of the collection of DST from insurance contract price to premiums collected.

The new DST law was made to address complaints from the industry, which said that under the old law they were forced to pay DST whether or not premiums are actually remitted by their clients. *Michelle V. Remo*

REAL ESTATE

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

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Letting others worry about their property management

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

OWNERS and developers nowadays find it more convenient to have their property handled by another property management company rather than their own in-house team.

"Professional management of real estate assets is a must in order for our properties to remain competitive and a viable investment as well as an attractive leasing option," said Jacques Dupasquier, chair of 19-1 Realty Corp., owner and developer of Net One Center, a state-of-the-art office tower in Fort Bonifacio Global City.

With locators having 24/7 operations, 19-1 Realty Corp. needed a property management company which possess the know-how to manage a property like Net One Center.

"We're renting spaces here so we're dealing not with owners but lessees and they are valued in today's market and we must be attentive to their needs," explained Carlos "Charlie" Rufino, a director of 19-1 Realty.

WITH RELIABLE professional property managers overseeing several pieces of their property, owners and developers like Rufino, left, and Dupasquier have more time to concentrate on their core business.

Experience in managing property

This was one consideration why 19-1 Realty took the services of FPDSavills apart from the fact that it has ample experience in managing property (14 years) in this country and its strategic alliances with the best property management companies worldwide.

But why not just rely on one's in-house team?

"Each type of real estate property is different, it has specific needs, specific technology and specific equipment. Somehow you don't get economies of scale by having everything done by your in-house as the technician you might need for one (piece of your property) may not be as effective for the other," explained Dupasquier.

Rufino also added that owners and developers are getting more and more sophisticated in their choice of property managers. This way, they can concentrate more on their core business.

"The people on sight should be very well versed. They must not only be responsive but must be able to anticipate any problem that might crop up," he said.

Industry pioneer

In the Philippines, FPDSavills is one of the pioneers in the industry and has continued to be a leading property management firm for more than a decade.

"FPDSavills has more than 40 full property management and close to 200 technical service contracts nationwide and currently handles an impressive property management portfolio of approximately 1.4 million square meters," reported Elizabeth Rabuy, director and general manager at FPDSavills.

The company provides professional property and maintenance services to almost all types of property, offering a wide range of management services such as property evaluations and planning, maintenance/repairs, 24-hour emergency service, monthly financial reports and effective tenant relations.

With almost 650 personnel in the country, FPDSavills is continuously reviewing and enhancing its operational service standards in line with ISO 9001:2000 standards.

In-depth knowledge

"FPDSavills has worked with both landlords and tenants for more than a decade in the Philippines, and knows them inside out. This in-depth knowledge makes us the ideal company to depend on for all day to day management services," said Rabuy.

FPDSavills is the trading name for the principal property services subsidiaries of Savills plc, a UK company with a full listing in the London Stock Exchange. Founded in 1855, the business is one of the leading firms of international property consultants and real estate agents in the world.

It has an international network of property professionals providing integrated services to clients through more than 140 offices in the Asia Pacific, Australia, South Africa and Europe and through its strategic alliance with Trammell Crow Co. in the Americas.

High-end environment

Rufino noted that FPDSavills has experiences in handling high-end or high-security environments with clients like Pacific Plaza Towers, Pacific Plaza Condominium and PBCom Tower, and this somehow gave them assurance they can handle well Net One Center day-to-day operations.

Said Dupasquier: "Net One Center has several locators that run 24/7 and has zero tolerance for down time. If there is a problem, FPDSavills must solve it right away, which they do with their 24-hour response team stationed in the building."

"Owners and developers have a number of reasons to be strict and demanding with their property managers," said Rabuy. "This country needs to attract investors from here and abroad and providing them a superlative and problem-free environment is the only way to get their attention," she explained.

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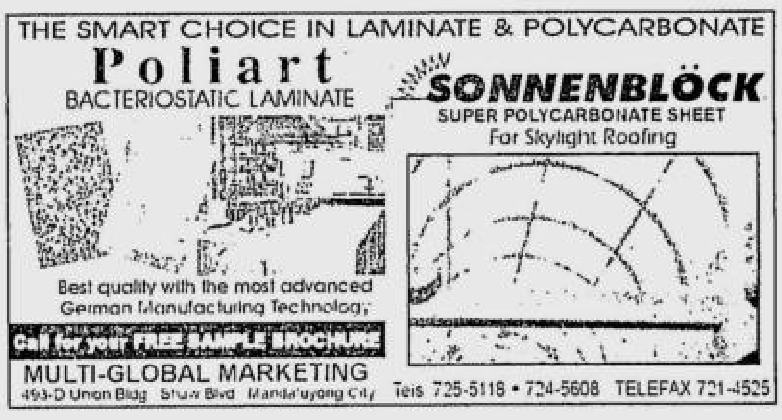
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Close family ties thrive in Ayala dev't

SISTERS Jean Arzadon and Molly Fernandez have always been close, even before they moved abroad. Sharing a house was never a problem here or in the United States, even after they started their own families.

Both women remain in constant contact with each other and their siblings in the Philippines, continuously nurturing close family ties wherever they may end up working and living.

Jean currently works as a claim specialist in the University of Washington, while Molly has an accounting job in Colorado, where she lives with her husband Albert. After over two decades as US residents, the sisters decided to go back to the country during their free time and look for a place where they could spend much-needed extended vacations. It didn't take long, as their decisiveness eventually led them to Ayala Greenfield Estates.

MOLLY with her husband Albert Fernandez and sister Jean Arzadon.

Retirement place

"One of my sisters was talking about this place in Laguna. She said she already bought a lot here. We visited the site, and when we saw it, we were very pleased and decided to buy, too. This is supposed to be our retirement place," Jean enthusiastically shares.

Jean and Molly pooled their resources to secure the lot, and gave their architect the necessary input on a design that went for the maximization of their property's considerable space. The house is nearly finished and is undergoing the final, crucial beautification touches. Its owners constantly check on its development, confident that it will be completely habitable in just a few more months. Jean claims that she's looking forward to living in Ayala Greenfield Estates for longer periods eventually.

"I think I'd like to live here once a year. But then while you're working, you can't stay here long. Once we're retired, we'll be staying half and half—six months here and six months abroad. We'd like to stay here during winter time, and stay in the US in summer," she says.

Very competitive features

Molly says she is impressed with the exclusive subdivision's very competitive features. She and Albert are happy with how quickly and efficiently the Ayala Land development has been evolving to meet residents' needs: "We have full utilities here already. There is sufficient supply of water and there are well-lighted streets. We also have the Village Clubhouse. It's added fun. And we're excited about the golf facilities."

According to Molly, living in other countries has its advantages, but she and her husband are almost ready to settle in Ayala Greenfield Estates and sample the Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed golf course as often as they can.

"We used to play in Japan, when Albert and I were stationed there. We're missing that, so eventually, we'll be playing here. Albert worked for the Department of Defense, in the US Air Force. We moved from place to place a lot, so I'm ready to stay here!"

The sisters entertained several guest relatives who were able to take a look at their new house after it was blessed last January. Jean and Molly are expecting more gatherings and visiting friends and family members when the house is fully finished. They can't wait for them to experience the pleasant climate, clean air, and the charming sights that go with their peaceful new home.

"We see the beautiful sunrise and the sunset. If it rains a little bit, you can see a rainbow right there. I like that this place is a little bit higher than the rest," Jean says. Albert, meanwhile, is reminded of the comforting ambience of his American home: "Our residence in Colorado is fairly close to the mountains and we have a pretty good view from the back of our house. This location kind of reminds me of that."

Satisfied with bonuses

The three homeowners are satisfied with the bonuses included in buying an Ayala Greenfield Estates lot. Owning one entitles them to a golf share, as well as free use of the leisure amenities available such as the infinity pool, the Fishing Lagoon and indoor courts.

Jean says she speaks for her sister and brother-in-law when she praises this particular project's assurance of highest attention to quality: "It's a well-established subdivision. You're playing safe, unlike when you buy in other places—you don't know when it's going to go down'. When there's the name 'Ayala' in there, it makes you feel a lot safer."

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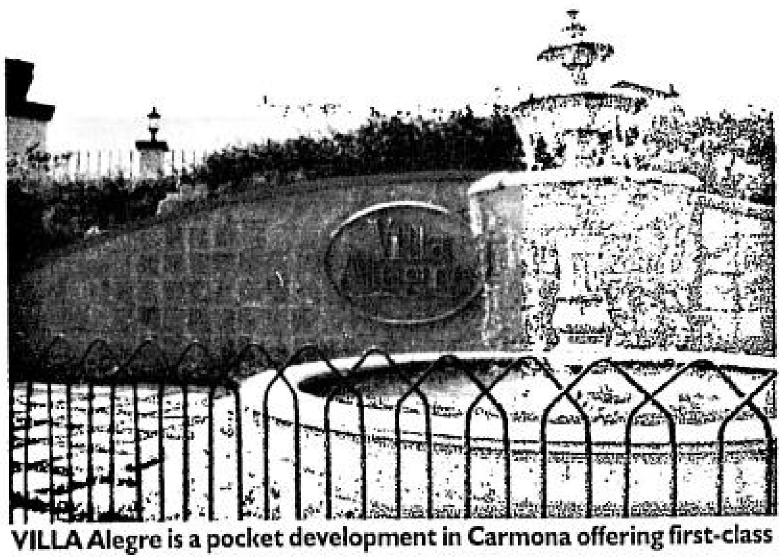
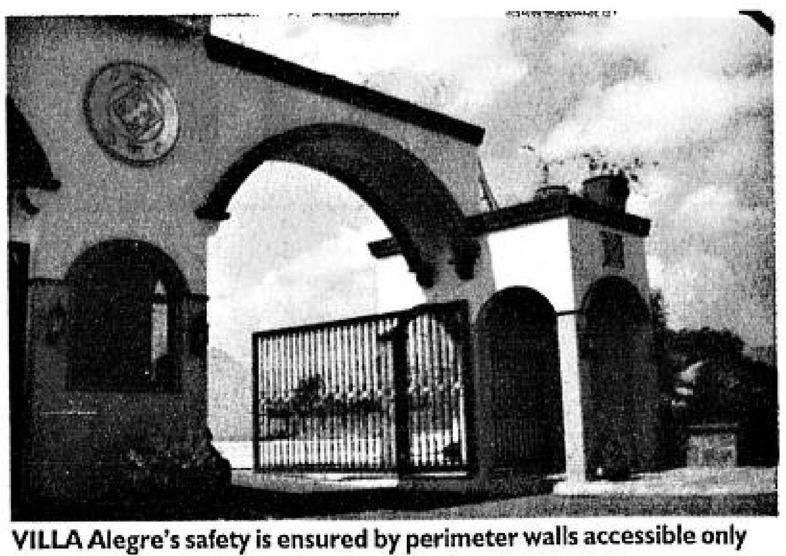
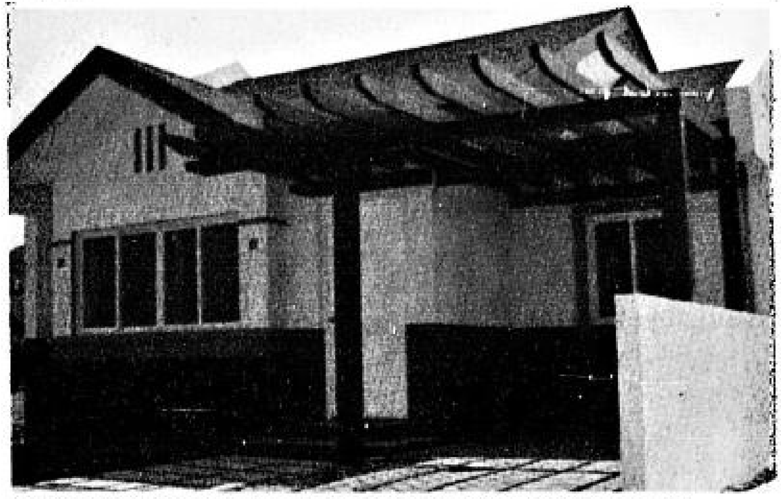
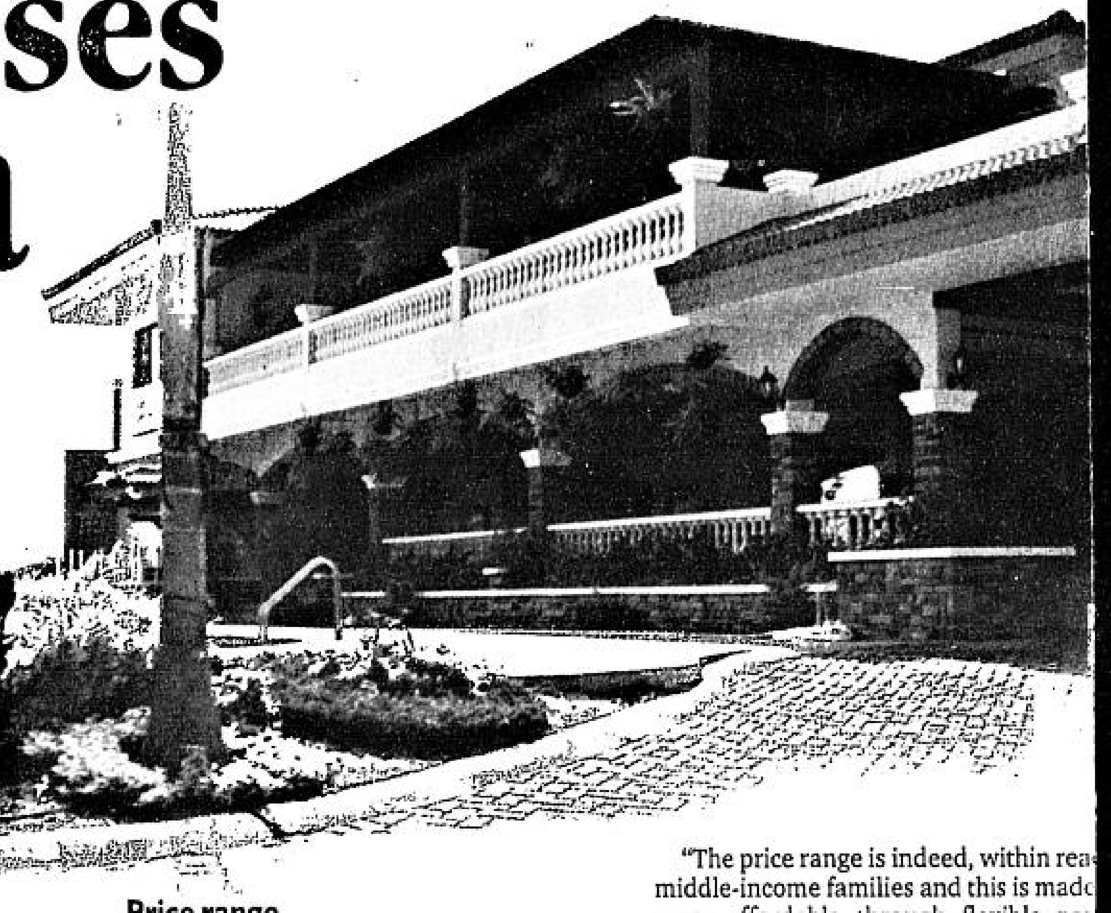
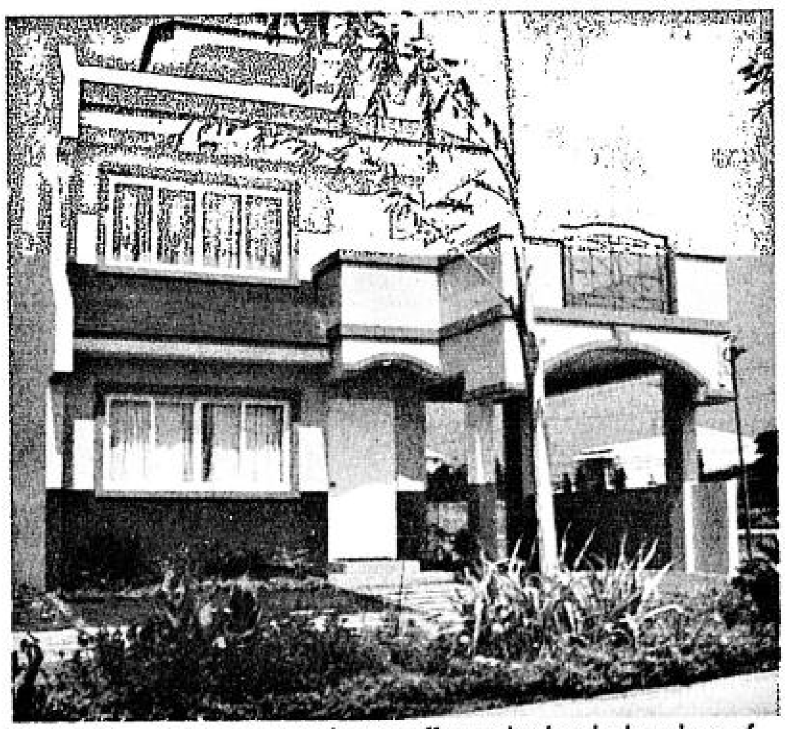

VILLA Alegre is a pocket development in Carmona offering first-class facilities for the privileged few.


VILLA Alegre's safety is ensured by perimeter walls accessible only through this well-designed and guarded main entrance.


JUST like its two-story counterparts, the bungalow types are available in two- or three-bedroom units.

A compact oasis rises in Carmona




VILLA Alegre's two-story unit even offers a viewing deck and a roof deck which can be used for future expansion.

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

A FEW minutes away from the South Luzon Expressway's Carmona exit in Cavite lie an oasis of affordable home units and a well thought-out and functional clubhouse, promising its future owners a refreshing respite from busy life of the metropolis.

Villa Alegre is the latest offering from DM Consunji Inc. subsidiary DMCI Homes, which is into developing and constructing small middle-income residential communities, with no more than 400 units per community.

Consisting of only 210 units, Villa Alegre is a pocket development for only a privileged few, offering first-class leisure facilities.

"This community, which carries Spanish-Mediterranean influence, is conveniently located near shopping centers, restaurants, theme parks, schools and golf clubs," says Rey Salazar, DMCI Homes director for marketing.

Price range

From P0.9 million (lots only) to P2.1 million for the house and lots package Villa Alegre aims to attract senior executives from the area as well as other families wanting to settle in a "not too urbanized" and safe location.

"The price range is indeed, within rea middle-income families and this is madc more affordable through flexible pa terms (through in-house, Pag-Ibig or ba nancing) and there's also the zero-in payment scheme," reveals Aida Serape, Homes project sales manager.

Villa Alegre offers two-story sing

Divine Mercy Shrine to attract foreign, local tourists to San Mateo

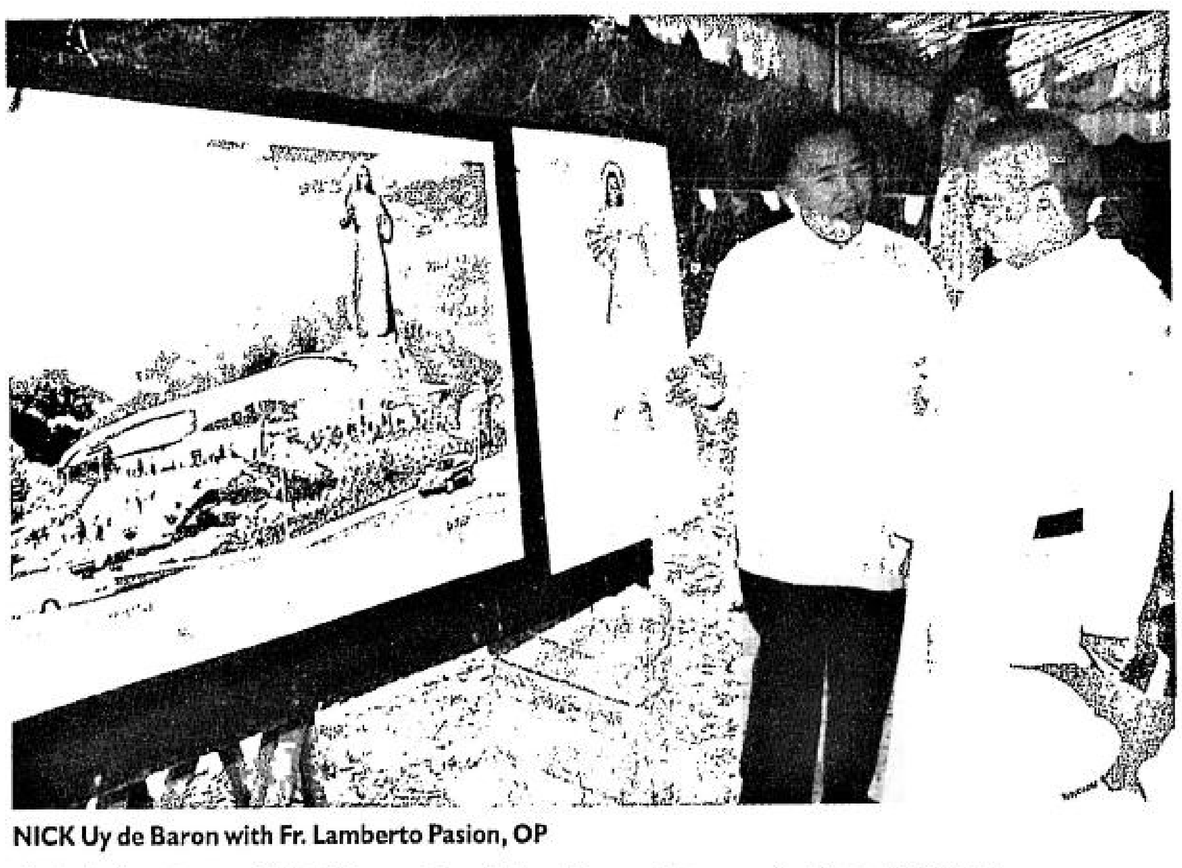
A UNIQUE concept of a Roman Catholic Church with the country's biggest Divine Mercy statue will be put up at the mountains of San Mateo believed to attract both foreign and local visitors and will serve as a landmark of the municipality.

Called the Divine Mercy Shrine, Rizal's biggest church will be built by the Divine Mercy Shrine Development Corp. headed by Nick Uy de Baron in a one-hectare lot. The project development consultant is R. S. Licup Design Group and Architects.

The Divine Mercy Shrine is a circular-shaped church with more than one thousand seating capacity and a 100-foot high statue of the Divine Mercy at the top of the mountain. The church and the statue will be donated to the Diocese of Antipolo.

Around the shrine and the statue, tourist attractions include waterfalls with lagoons, landscaped mountains with an aviary, a butterfly haven and a dove yard. These will be opened to the public for free. A 24-hour security will be provided and the Divine Mercy statue will be well-lighted at night.

San Mateo is no doubt the next destination of devotees, tourists and everybody.


NICK Uy de Baron with Fr. Lamberto Pasion, OP

Biggest Divine Mercy statue

At the back of the Divine Mercy Shrine is the 10-story high Divine Mercy image which costs around P10 million.

Uy de Baron said the Divine Mercy Shrine will also be like the Divine Mercy in a photograph. "The right side will have red rays to describe lifeblood while the left side is blue for water, just like other Divine Mercy photos and the statue will be well lighted at night for it to be seen far away from Metro Manila."

According to Ramon Licup, the designer of the shrine, there will be a viewing deck near the heart of the Divine Mercy statue where devotees and visitors can touch the statue's heart.

"This is actually a history in the making," said Msgr. Mariano Balbago Jr. during the groundbreaking and blessing of the site. "This is like the statue of Jesus Christ facing the sea in Rio de Janeiro. The Divine Mercy Shrine is a landmark where God will call each one to His mercy," he added.

Not just like other churches

The P50 million Divine Mercy Shrine will be one of the biggest in the country.

The church's posts are structured at the back of the pews so that everyone sitting can view its one-of-a-kind design. "The location is also wonderful because it is overlooking the San Mateo town and the Metro Manila view. So this is not just like any other church," Uy de Baron said.

He added it was Msgr. Balbago, parish priest of San Mateo, who gave the church's description and design. "He wants to have a circular or dome-shaped church and possibly a Divine Mercy statue," Uy de Baron said.

According to Msgr. Balbago, religious organizations in San Mateo are very happy that a Divine Mercy Shrine will be built in this town. "Various religious groups here can attest the belief of the people in God and this church may serve as their central place of worship."

GROUNDBREAKING ceremony is led by architect Ramon Licup, Nick Uy de Baron and his wife Mercy, general contractor Manuel Ley and architect Rusty Panuli.

CLUB 650 leisure and commercial complex

Club 650 leisure, commercial complex

A NEW sports and commercial hub rises in Libis, Quezon City, designed to draw together shopping and sports enthusiast in a relaxed community atmosphere. Club 650 sports is a 5,000 square-meter, three-story high structure nestled at the quiet portion of a 8750-sq-m lot, housing facilities for 16 badminton courts, gym, wall climbing and two basketball courts.

Complementary to the sports complex are food kiosk, restaurants, two lounge areas, security lockers, changing rooms and showers.

At shoulders is Club Shoppes, where visibly situated are 40 shops and boutiques fronting the prime spot of E. Rodriguez, Libis, Quezon City. These are selected to cater to needs of the sports facility and community needs in the vicinity. Club Shoppes draws interest of c plex clients, catering to both shopp and sports persons' needs and like an environment where the essent are found, the important and the s prising have their place and the s prises are truly refreshing.

Securely enclosed and well li night, parking and pedestrian tra is well apportioned and planned.

Planned, designed and proj managed by Royalink Builders I Club 650 Leisure and Commercia Libis is a place where sports leisure meet.

Urban offers lecture serie on investing in real estate

WOULD-BE real estate investors, developers, professionals and property owners are invited to attend a six-day CEP-Real Estate Lecture Series on Investing in Real Estate that will be conducted by the Urban Institute of Real Estate. Urban Institute believes that this lecture series would introduce to the participants the ABCs of real estate investing to avoid costly mistakes that were usually suffered by inexperienced investors.

The Asian Institute of Management (AIM) Conference Center (Acceed), located at the corner of Benavidez and Trasierra Streets, Legaspi Village, Makati City, is the venue of the lecture series that will start on May 31 and end on June 5, from 1:30 to 6 p.m.

The following subjects, which may be attended on a day to day basis, are included and covered in the series: May 31—Investing in Real Estate: Opportunities, Techniques and What You Need to Learn; June 1—Property Development and HLURB Rules and R tions with Updates; June 2—Real Taxation and Contract Documen and Registration; June 3—Pr Management and Real Estate App June 4—Real Estate Finance and I ment Analysis; and June 5—Math ics of Investment for Real Estate.

The lecture series is accredited Department of Trade and Indust CEP compliance and will have as l ers lawyer Dennis Tablizo, a ver known and sought-after lecturer gal aspects of real estate; and en Enrico Cruz, a licensed real estat sultant and 1st and 8th placer in t al estate appraiser's and broker's examination, respectively, and was invested as a "Real Estate Fe by the Philippine Council of Real Educators.

For other details, call Urban Ins at 681-0928 or e-mail at urbane cific.net.ph.

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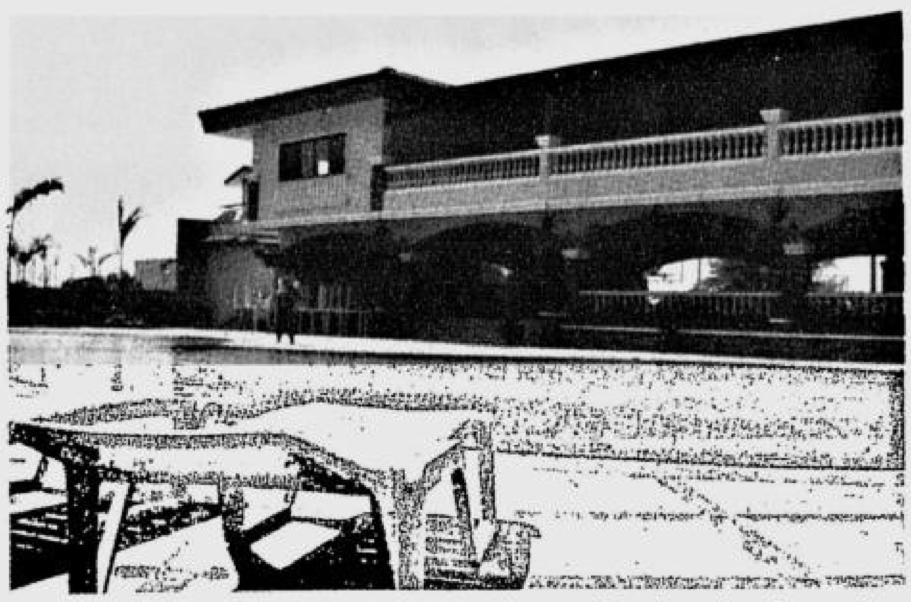

COMPLEMENTING the clubhouse's resort-like amenities is a swimming pool for adults as well as for kids.

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tached units and bungalow single-attached units with three or four bedrooms.

Lot sizes ranges from 98 to 176 square meters.

Clubhouse

The main attraction of the community is its multilevel clubhouse with function rooms.

The place, which can accommodate up to 300 people, features a videoke room, changing room as well as function rooms for small gathering.

Within the clubhouse are luxurious amenities including adult and kiddie pool, basketball court, jogging path, parks and playground and pocket gardens.

"We only used first-class materials in building this clubhouse, which reflects how the rest of the units within the community were also built," says Salazar.

In fact, he explains that as a guarantee, DMCI Homes will repair any defects in workmanship within a year from purchase at no cost to the homeowners.

Buy back/trade-in program

Salazar says homeowners of Villa Alegre may trade in their unit for a bigger DMCI homes unit within the several pieces of property the company develops in and around Metro Manila.

"Though this buy back/trade-in program, we allow our homeowners to expand their living space—with less hassle—as their family grows or their needs change," reveals Salazar.

Salazar even assures that DMCI Homes' commitment does not end in the construction of one's unit.

"Beyond, dependable structures, the company's service extends to consider the upkeep of the facilities and immediate environment of the community that it built," says Salazar.

Real estate career options for new graduates

By Alexis A. Acacio

BUILDING DREAMS

AS FAR as I know, there is no specific college level course that gives one a college degree in real estate. Most schools offer a real estate course mainly as an elective or at the most, as a short course. So it is but natural that new graduates do not directly seek a career in real estate. The real estate field varies and one just has to look at the unlimited career possibilities.

I have received a lot of e-mail from our new graduates. Their courses vary—from architecture, engineering, marketing to business management, etc. And it is gratifying to know that many of them would want to pursue a "real estate" profession. Joining a real estate group can expose the new graduate into unlimited opportunities.

A real estate company has various divisions that intertwine to deliver a real estate product for its target market. These divisions can be broadly categorized into real estate financing, legal transaction and management, marketing and development.

Career options

To our new graduates who would want to plunge in the real estate profession, here are your career options:

- **Real Estate Financing**—Any real estate project needs money to push through. Sources of financing include banks, financing institutions and lending agencies. A career in the mortgage division of a bank for example would expose the new graduate into the various fields of real estate financing including appraisal. One will learn how to assess a property and give a fair measure of its value.

For an engineering graduate, you will be exposed to the various types of infrastructures that are given as collateral pieces of properties. These include houses, vacant lots, buildings, office spaces and even vacation homes.

- **Real Estate Management**—Usually for experienced real estate practitioners and advisers, real estate managers are responsible for making sure that real estate pieces of property are profitable and properly maintained. Legal advice is also needed in real estate transactions for a lot of legal documentation are required in the selling and buying of real estate.
- **Real Estate Marketing**—Also called real estate brokerage, this involves acting as a middleman in real estate transactions. The broker negotiates for the sale, lease, exchange and mortgage of real property. You may want to initially be a part-time broker and then as your career prospers, may eventually give up your current job to devote more time for this. You may eventually end up having your own marketing sales force in this kind of job.

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If you are the type that likes to meet people and would want to discuss or profile the advantages of a specific real estate investment, then this field of specialization may be the right one for you.

- **Real Estate Production**—This is usually a career direction for new architects, engineers and even business graduates. Working for a real estate company can offer you various opportunities to practice and exercise what you have learned in college.

Working in the technical division of a real estate company offers two career paths:

—**Design.** If you have a technical background, the design group of a real estate developer prepares the plans and working drawings for real estate development. These detailed plans serve as the basis of constructing the required development.

—**Construction.** The favorite of civil engineering graduates, real estate construction companies offer an environment for you to learn and experience how various infrastructures are built. These various infrastructures include houses, buildings, roads, bridges, warehouses, clubhouses and the like. You will also learn how to deal with various types of people—from construction workers, material suppliers, inspectors, owners, etc.

Looking ahead

A real estate career can be very rewarding. As you move on in life, you may eventually go into real estate development, consultancy and management. The leaders and prominent people in the real estate industry today started out as either technical, legal, marketing or management personnel of real estate companies. After getting enough experience and knowledge, they eventually set out to build their own companies.

In selecting a real estate career, it is very important that you match what you really want to do with what the job opportunity has to offer. In any career, real estate plays a very important and vital role.

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E-mail the author at aaacacio@pacific.net.ph.

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Calamba community registers brisk sales of housing units

NEW standards in community development and management in the mid-income housing sector have been pushing sales of San Antonio Heights, a project near the Calamba exit of the Southern Luzon Expressway.

The 105-hectare development is a partnership among LPHI, Greenfield Development Corp. and Batangas Assets Corp.

Brisk take-up rate

Located at the foot of Mt. Makiling in Sto. Tomas, Batangas, house-and-lot units of varying sizes with price tags from P600,000 to P1.4 million sold at a phenomenal rate of 30 units per month in 2003. Phases 1, 2 and 3, which total 1,131 units, have been sold out. The 21-hectare phase 4 to be launched in April will have a total of 1,224 units.

Project officer Martin de Leon attributes the brisk take-up rate to LPHI's expertise in building and maintaining communities so they remain attractive places to live in over time. The best proof of LPHI's expertise in this area are the sustained property prices of San Antonio Heights 1 and 2. Developed in the late '90s, the first phases of San Antonio Heights continue to enjoy high property values.

Community management

Community facilities are well-maintained and water supply remains strong.

"Community management is all about maintaining the standards and amenities of a residential area so that the entire development maintains or increases its value," De Leon said. This science includes maintenance of the security, water and other vital systems as well as the upkeep of the community hall and other common facilities. Drawing from the expertise of LPHI parent company Ayala Land Inc., developer of the Makati Business District, LPHI brings this skill into each project it offers to the public.

OFFICERS of Laguna Properties Holdings inspect the site of San Antonio Heights at the foot of Mt. Makiling.

In contrast, most local developers in Batangas and Laguna merely rely on the homeowners' associations to maintain the communities and do not make provisions for the transfer of technology and consistent training. As a result, many subdivisions are not well secured, have poorly maintained roads and water systems and deteriorate over the long-run.

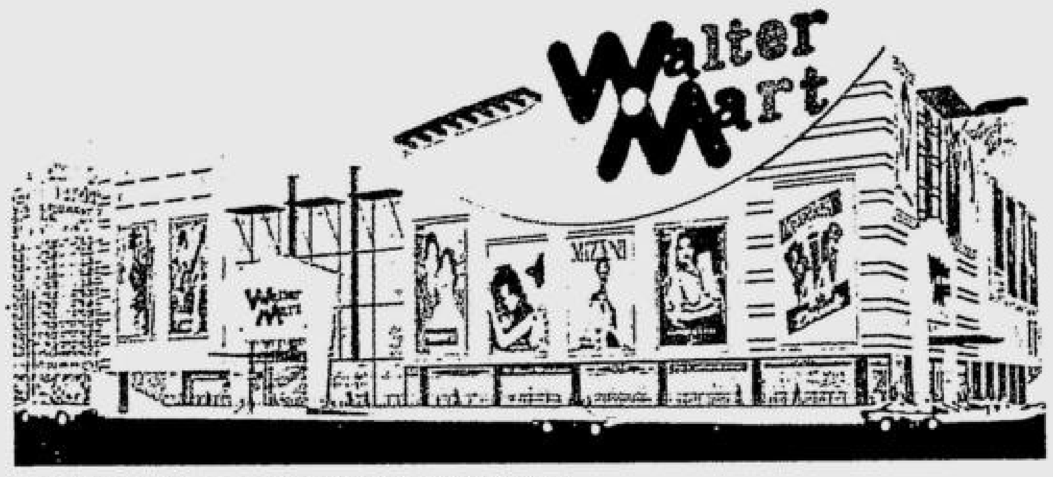
Affordable, durable homes

With units for as low as P600,000 and monthly amortizations of P3,900 per month, San Antonio Heights Phase 4 offers affordable and durable single-detached dwellings as well as townhouses. Homes with floor areas from 33 to 81 sq m on lots that range from 50 to 150 sq m make use of a European building system that assures superior and consistent quality. In fact, each home comes with a 15-year warranty against structural defects.

Like each phase of San Antonio Heights, Phase 4 will have its own multipurpose hall, basketball court, children's playground, jogging path, open play area, overhead water tank and deepwell. Residents of this new phase will also have access to a community center with a pavilion and swimming pool.

De Leon relates that in keeping with strong public demand, LPHI developed more affordable homes for Phase 4. New house models and smaller lot units were introduced to maintain an average selling price of P800,000.

Basking in the shadow of Mt. Makiling, San Antonio Heights has maintained a rustic character even if it is just a few minutes way from a couple of industrial parks which are home to many multinational companies. From Makati, San Antonio Heights is a little over an hour's drive.



ARCHITECT'S perspective of WalterMart Makati

Waltermart construction in full swing

THERE will soon rise a WalterMart Shopping Center consisting of five fully integrated floors. Strategically located in the bustling intersection of Pasay Road and Arnaiz Avenue, the new WalterMart will soon give customers a convenient and leisurely shopping experience.

A well-designed modern architecture would give customers ease in total shopping convenience.

The mall will have a wide assortment of big retailers composed of WalterMart Supermarket, Robinsons Department Store, Abenson Appliances, HomePlus furniture, Electroworld Computer shop along with popular fast-food and full-service restaurants. There will also be ample basement parking and four state-of-the-art cinemas to complete the total mall experience. These facilities and anchor tenants will all give customers the modern, trendy and stylish lifestyle that shoppers look for.

Best alternative

The upcoming WalterMart Makati is a powerhouse of stores. It is a dwelling place for retailers to target the modern and trendy Makati customers. When it opens its doors late this year, it will be the best alternative for families seeking convenience and fun.

Construction of WalterMart Makati, slated to open before the Christmas season, is now in full swing.

APO CEMENT PLANT
Naga, Cebu

CONSTRUCTION SHOW SPONSOR
CEMEX Philippines Group of Companies, which include brand-name products Cemex Marine and APO Cement, recently signed up as the major sponosr of the 12th Construction Show Cebu on June 4 tp 7 at the Cebu Trade Hall, SM City Cebu. Sealing the agreement with a handshake are event organizers L.A. Ducut and Co. Inc. managing director Lilibeth D. Abais and Cemex Philippines marketing manager Remigio A. De Ungria Jr.

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Ayala Land launches Serendra

GUESTS gather around the Serendra scale model to familiarize themselves with the features of the verdant residential development by Ayala Land.

MODERN Filipino families can now enjoy the convenience and comfort of suburban living in the city—thanks to real estate conglomerate Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) and Community Innovations Inc. (CII) for creating Serendra, a sprawling residential project situated within the Bonifacio Global City in Taguig.

In a three-day launch held at the Serendra Sales Pavilion, ALI and CII officials introduced the development to clients, well-wishers, friends and members of the media. The ALI officials included Fernando Zobel de Ayala, ALI chair; Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, vice chair; Francisco Licuanan III, president; Jaime Ayala, executive vice president; and Angela de Villa-Lacson, senior vice president.

"We saw the need to develop Serendra because modern families would rather live in a community with lots of open space," said Lacson.

ROBERT Cruz, Randy Limjoco and Angela de Villa-Lacson during the launch of Serendra, ALI's newest residential development that will rise in Bonifacio Global City

However, she added that "many people cant afford to live in current residential developments that provide these benefits because it's either too far from their place of work or the cost is way beyond their means." With Serendra, this difficulty is resolved.

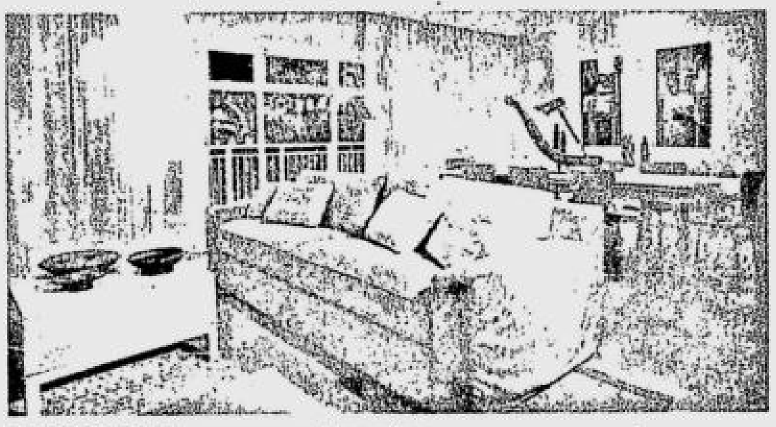
Serendra is a major landmark in the history of ALI's growth and the realization of the company's thrust for 2004, which is innovation, according to Licuanan.

"It's a highly innovative product that offers suburban living in the city at a reasonable price," noted Licuanan. Serendra has a variety of units fit for a broad spectrum of the market.

"Prices range from P2.5 million to P9 million for the budget-conscious, and from P6 million to P18 million for the upscale market. If you can't afford a big unit, you can own a smaller one, but still get to enjoy the same set of benefits: convenience, security and nature," Lacson explained.

Poetry, guitar and song performances livened up the three-evening affair.

Capping the event was a guided tour at the Sales Pavilion, including the model units with the interior designers on hand to explain the design intent. The tour gave the guests an actual feel of what it is to live in Serendra.



AT SERENDRA, every room has a view.

Just minutes away from the Makati business district, Serendra is a large-scale, yet low-density, development that stretches across a 12-hectare lot. About 65 percent of the land is devoted to lush greenery—giving its residents the benefit of living close to nature in a peaceful and secure community.

Feng shui and The Residences at Greenbelt

IN ASIA, water is treasured as a symbol of wealth. Based on Chinese geomancy and the art of feng shui, it is believed that the flow of water nurtures prosperity, engenders life, enhances vitality, and acts as a connection to the journey of life.

Water indeed can be seen as the primal element in feng shui, as it guides and remedies every possible situation, bringing wealth, reflection and transformation in its gentle yet powerful flow. It is no wonder that for thousands of years, Asian homes have sought to integrate flowing water into their environments, for all these reasons, and for the simple universal truth that flowing water is beautiful.

Key element

At The Residences at Greenbelt, the new high-rise luxury condominium towers from Ayala Land, water is a key element in design and landscape. It possesses its own carefully nurtured gardens and pools, on its podium level as well as integrates with Greenbelt, taking part in the interplay of nature, lifestyle and commerce that bring to fore the ideals of feng shui.

The design of the Laguna Tower, the first of three at The Residences, symbolizes the presence of water and growth. Its height creates a sense of strength, a backdrop in which prosperity can reside. Its glass-and-concrete façade integrates the reflective nature of water with the stable, powerful element of earth.

THE RESIDENCES at Greenbelt

At its podium level, The Residences offers a meditative garden decorated with ponds and fountains. Water here flows gently and slowly, allowing positive energy or *chi* to collect and gain strength, symbolizing the accumulation of wealth and prosperity. Integrating it into a green garden setting creates opportunity for spiritual growth and wealth in intangible assets such as peace of mind and serenity.

Trump card

The Residences at Greenbelt plays its trump card with the Greenbelt commercial center and park. Greenbelt has always been a treasured urban park, with its pond and chapel and stands of graceful trees. With the renovation of the area and the redevelopment of its components into a world-class urban retreat, the positive effects of Greenbelt on the feng shui of its entire neighborhood has only been enhanced.

All of Greenbelt is now the haven of water features which evoke the unified themes of movement, growth, wealth and health.

Pools flow around the new plaza of Greenbelt 3, while calming waters of a carp-filled pond surround the chapel of Sto. Niño de Paz. Lily ponds and reflecting pools with lush water ponds form a serene environment for Greenbelt 4's upscale boutiques. Greenbelt 2's fountains set amid garden lawns enhance al fresco gustatory experiences at the enclave.

Landscape

The Residences takes advantage of this situation in a most auspicious form of landscape: the floodplain of a river, between mountains and the sea. This landscape, treasured in Chinese feng shui as the area where dragons make their abode, forms the basis for many great cities of the world. From any unit in Laguna Tower, a resident can see the hills of Antipolo; the Pasig River, flowing by and disappearing into the city, considered a most fortunate situation; Laguna de Bay and the mountains of Batangas; and, the jewel of Metro Manila, Manila Bay and its inestimable sunset. The power of water as a symbol of wealth and prosperity can be seen as being focused from the windows of a home at The Residences at Greenbelt.

The Residences at Greenbelt makes excellent use of the water features of Greenbelt to provide a natural and auspicious flow of *chi* to its residents. The condominium complex combines cutting-edge urban living with the wisdom and knowledge of feng shui.

Water is the symbol of wealth and prosperity; its slow, steady, inexorable flow is the metaphor for power and the journey of life. As a seat of power, commanding one's own life journey, there is no better choice than The Residences at Greenbelt.

A three-bedroom model unit is available for viewing at the third level of Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center.

The mavericks behind Joya

JOYA, Rockwell Land Corp.'s newest residential development, comes alive under the masterful direction of a dream team of the finest interior designers and landscape architects.

Interior designer extraordinaire Guillermo "Butch" Valdez, formerly of Texeira, California, works hand in hand with seasoned architectural and design consultant Arlen de Guzman to create a perfect combination of traditional and contemporary design that is unique to Joya's main lobby, club room and other common areas.

Exceptional designs

Alice Erfe, known for quite a number of exceptional designs found in Manila's top five-star hotels, oversees the fixture, furniture and interior procurement.

Landscape architects Joaquin "Jacko" Zialcita (J.M. Zialcita) and John Nartowicz (LACC International) round out the design team. These two key figures work in close collaboration to provide a lush setting of flora and fauna that would speak volumes of Joya's elegance and style.

By and large, these five talented and highly skilled artists enhance the natural beauty of space and light that architect Willie V. Coscolluela and the team of engineers provide Joya's plans, structure and systems design.

Rockwell Land Corp. remains true to form by commissioning these five "mavericks" to create another top-notch real estate development at Rockwell Center.

Addmix strengthens, smoothens and expands cement

AddMix
The Cement Saver

SAMANTHA, partner of Sementho, attracted UAP convention participants to the Addmix booth in the UAP trade exhibit area.

ADDMIX was launched during the national convention of the United Architects of the Philippines held recently at the Manila Hotel. It is a new product of Global Brands, the maker of Super Vulcaseal and Original Rugby. The product was demonstrated to the participants of the convention and got the nod of architects, engineers, contractors and suppliers of construction materials present during the demonstrations.

To highlight its beneficial effects on cement, Addmix was represented by Samantha, a model who came painted in the brand color and characteristic of Addmix. Samantha symbolized the "coming to life" of the brand. She is the female partner of Sementho (cement) and she gives strength, power and beauty to cement.

Variety of products

Addmix has a variety of products designed to suit every need. There is Addmix Ultra, the concrete fortifier; Addmix Easy, the mortar and plaster enhancer; and Addmix Plus, the cement saver and volume expander. These products are available in 150-gram sachets. One box contains 50 sachets and can be stored for two years.

According to Billy Arrienda, Global Brands AVP for construction and business development, the Addmix powder is basically made of nonhazardous substances, specifically synthetic carboxylated and sulphanated polymers and reactive silica-based and air-entraining polymers. He said this powder is designed to impart water reduction, plasticizing effect and volume enhancement qualities to cement-based mixtures.

Addmix Easy contains shrinkage compensating agents as well as redispensable acrylic bonding agent to enhance thirotropic and bonding properties.

Addmix Ultra is recommended for all types of concrete mixes requiring high strength, high flowability and workability and for precast concrete.

Addmix Plus is recommended for concrete hollow blocks precast light elements and job-mixed concrete not more than 25 Mpa.

Addmix strongly implies that it is something added to a mixture and does magic with it. And indeed, Addmix does marvels as it strengthens and enhances the mixture to make it look better. This is a boon to the construction industry as Addmix's overall beneficial effect is that it is cost- and time-efficient and gives concrete a higher quality.

LIFESTYLE

For feedback, text us at (0918) 382-4061 or (0916) 200-1160
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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

MONDAY ARTS ◎ TUESDAY FITNESS ◎ WEDNESDAY 2BU ◎ THURSDAY FOOD ◎ FRIDAY HOME & FASHION ◎ SUNDAY SURPRISES

POND'S GIRLS. (Back row) Maike Evers, Amanda Griffin, Samantha Brandon; (front) Cecil Marfori, Katrina Garcia, Marilen Faustino

Former Pond's image models give advice on how to protect your skin from various threats

AMANDA Griffin's mom only taught her to apply sunscreen regularly. The rest of the beauty tips she learned from girlfriends and, yes, TV documentaries.

Girltalk on skincare

Text by Anne A. Jambora
Photos by Roger Carpio

THE LARGEST, most visible organ of the human body is the skin and its condition speaks volumes about a person's lifestyle. Whether you are constantly stressed out, you sleep well, drink too much alcohol, smoke like a chimney—even emotions—leave marks on the skin.

Many outside forces also cause damage to the skin. The sun's ultra violet rays and pollution are among the threats to the skin that are hard to avoid.

But with proper skincare knowledge, the skin is better able to withstand all the challenges it has to face. And for Pond's new face, the Australian-raised English-Filipino television host/video jockey/commercial model/entrepreneur Amanda Griffin, it's never too early to start paying attention to your skin.

"The bulk of the damage [to your skin] is done when you're really young and it shows up much later," says the surprisingly quiet and reserved Griffin. Although she herself started using beauty products at 15, she says the critical skincare stages, as she learned from a TV documentary, are between 13 and 18 years.

Most skin variations occur between those ages, and Griffin says it's the age when kids need to start wearing moisturizers and sunblock, especially in a hot tropical country like the Philippines.

"I think a lot of young girls don't realize that. I mean, of course, you're young and you don't think about [taking care of your skin] too much," she says.

"Putting on makeup at 13 is too much, of course, but skincare is another story," adds the 1998 Pond's girl, architect Cecil Marfori.

Aside from getting a lot of sleep, drinking plenty of water and not drinking coffee at all, Griffin, a self-confessed beach bum, says she moisturizes and wears sunscreen throughout the day, and usually wears hats when she goes out. After being under the sun, Griffin advises teenage girls never to forget to apply moisturizer before going to bed so the skin doesn't dry up.

"I'm always under the sun and I get freckles. To even out my skin tone I use a Pond's whitening product every day. I think Pond's is such a great product," Griffin says. "I take care of my skin, especially my face. In this line of business you have to. If your name is attached to something it is important to maintain the image of the product as well."

Her decision to endorse Pond's was a no-brainer for Griffin, who says she has been using the skincare products way before the opportunity to endorse them came knocking on her door. "It's a bit of a responsibility because anyone in the public eye is a role model, like it or not. A lot of the fans I have are young girls, so I wouldn't endorse anything that I don't think is good for the teenage market," she says.

Tried and tested

But just because one product works for your girlfriend doesn't mean it's going to work for you. Don't experiment with any product on your face, cautions 2002 Pond's girl Marilen Faustino. When choosing beauty products, it is best to pick those that have been tried and tested, and have been consistently around, adds Marfori.

Aside from telling girls to make the sunscreen and moisturizer staples in their *kikay* kits, Samantha Brandon, who endorsed the product last year, reminds them never to make the mistake of leaving makeup overnight—even when tired to the bones.

And always have a nice cleanser at hand, says 2000 Pond's girl Maike Evers, who is currently busy, and mighty happy for finally having the time to finish her course in social sciences.

The former Pond's girls are now all very busy with their respective careers. Katrina Garcia, who graced the 2001 commercial, works at the front desk of the Mandarin Oriental.

"It's great to follow in their footsteps, and I'm very flattered to be a Pond's girl. They're all pretty girls and they're all very nice," Griffin says.

Longtime friend Evers says Griffin would make a very good Pond's endorser: "She has a pretty face and a very nice personality, and I think she fits the product very well."

Griffin's advice is to take care of your skin today, and reap the rewards when you grow old. "I think certain things add character to your face to make you more distinctive and beautiful. I look at my mother now and I think she has aged gracefully. She looks better now than she ever did, and I hope that I will, too, when I grow old."

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

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SECRETS OF JAPANESE COOKING REVEALED...

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The Maya Kitchen presents traditional and modern Japanese cooking, the culinary trend that has captured the favor of foodies worldwide. Chef Seiji Kamura, author of the book "Secrets of Japanese Cooking" will show how one can learn the fine arts of Japanese cuisine in a one-day session class. Hurry, sign up now!

May 15 (Sat) 2-6 p.m. Mixed Sashimi; (Tuna, Salmon, Kani), Miso Soup, Egg Soup, Ramen Noodle (Shoyo & Miso base), Soba (Cha Soba, Niku Soba), Dohburi (Gyudon & Chyukadon), Gyoza, Chicken Shabu-Shabu, Seaweed Salad, Fish Teriyaki, Yakitori. Bonus: new wave maki. P1,500.

Junior Culinary Workshop (JCW): for boys and girls age 6-12 (Pre-enrolment required. Limited enrolment only). Free cookbook May 11 & 12 (Tue-Wed) 8:30 a.m. - 12 nn. Lecture on Kitchen Safety. Recipes: Fish in the Straw and Hay, Chuckling Chicken, Scrimble Scramble, Soft Pretzels; Mini Pizza Tarts, Lemon Jumbles, Choco Crispy Bites, Fruit Crumble. Fee P2,000.

Young People's Cook-In for Teens: (Pre-enrolment required. Limited enrolment only). May 13-15 (Thur-Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lecture on hygiene, sanitation and safety; *Cooking Activity:* Trio-filled Soup, Crab Stuffed Mushrooms, Pork-Chicken Sate, Waikiki B-B-Q Baby Back Ribs, Fried Garlic Squid, Pink Sugar Puffs; *Microwave Baking Activity:* Seafood Quiche Lorraine, Lemon Meringue Pie, Fluffy Marshmallow Pie, Savory Cheese Bread, Flaming Peaches, Butterscotch Bars, Traditional Pineapple-Upside Down; and *Cocktails:* Yogurt Cocktails, Pickled Quail Eggs, Cheese Choux Pastry Puffs, Miniature Party Crepes, Clam/Squid Balls, Pita Pizzas, Orange Pekoe Tea Punch. Fee: P2,500.

ONE-DAY SPECIALS (ADULTS)

Catering Seminar: May 7 & 8 (9 a.m. - 3 p.m.) Technical and legal aspects of operation, costing, quantification, portion control, licensing requirements, proper hygiene, sanitation and safety aspects in food preparation. Actual table set up of buffet presentation including skirting know how. Actual cooking preparation of popular catering dishes like Morcon, Baked Macaroni, All-Meat Paella, Galantina, Soy Chicken, Roast Pork, Special Dessert. Bonus: Pack lunch catering. P2,500.

Baking from Scratch and Prepared Mixes: May 8 (Sat) 2:00 - 5 p.m. Assorted Brownies (Black Forest, Apple Chunk, Rocky Road); Pineapple Carrot Cake, Choco-Banana Loaf; Chocolate Muffins with Fudge Frosting, Hotdog on Stick; Butterscotch Squares and Chocolate Crinkles. P800.

Waitering & Bartending Basic: May 11-14 (Tue-Fri) 2-6 p.m. with OJT for qualified students. Workshop on waitering etiquettes, table setup, dining service standards, napkin folding, types of wine glasses, mixing and serving of drinks, classification of wine and spirits. P3,000.

Pinoy Breads (hands-on): May 22 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Ensaymada, Mongo Loaf, Rainbow Bread, Banana Bread, Raisin Bread, Pandesal with Filling (Adobo, Spanish Bread) including costing and lecture on the use of baker's percentage with practical works. P1,000.

Gulaman Delights: May 22 (Sat) 3 - 6 p.m. Cathedral Window, Almond Gulaman Taho and Cooler, Buko-Pandan Jello, Fruity Chewy Salad, Coffee Mousse. P500.

Japanese Cooking: May 29 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Miso Soup, Mixed Tempura, Sukiyaki, Kamameshi; assorted sushi: Kappamaki, Tekamaki, California Maki and Nigiri. P1,000 with free cookbook.

CERTIFICATE COURSES (Adults. Limited enrolment, pre-registration required)

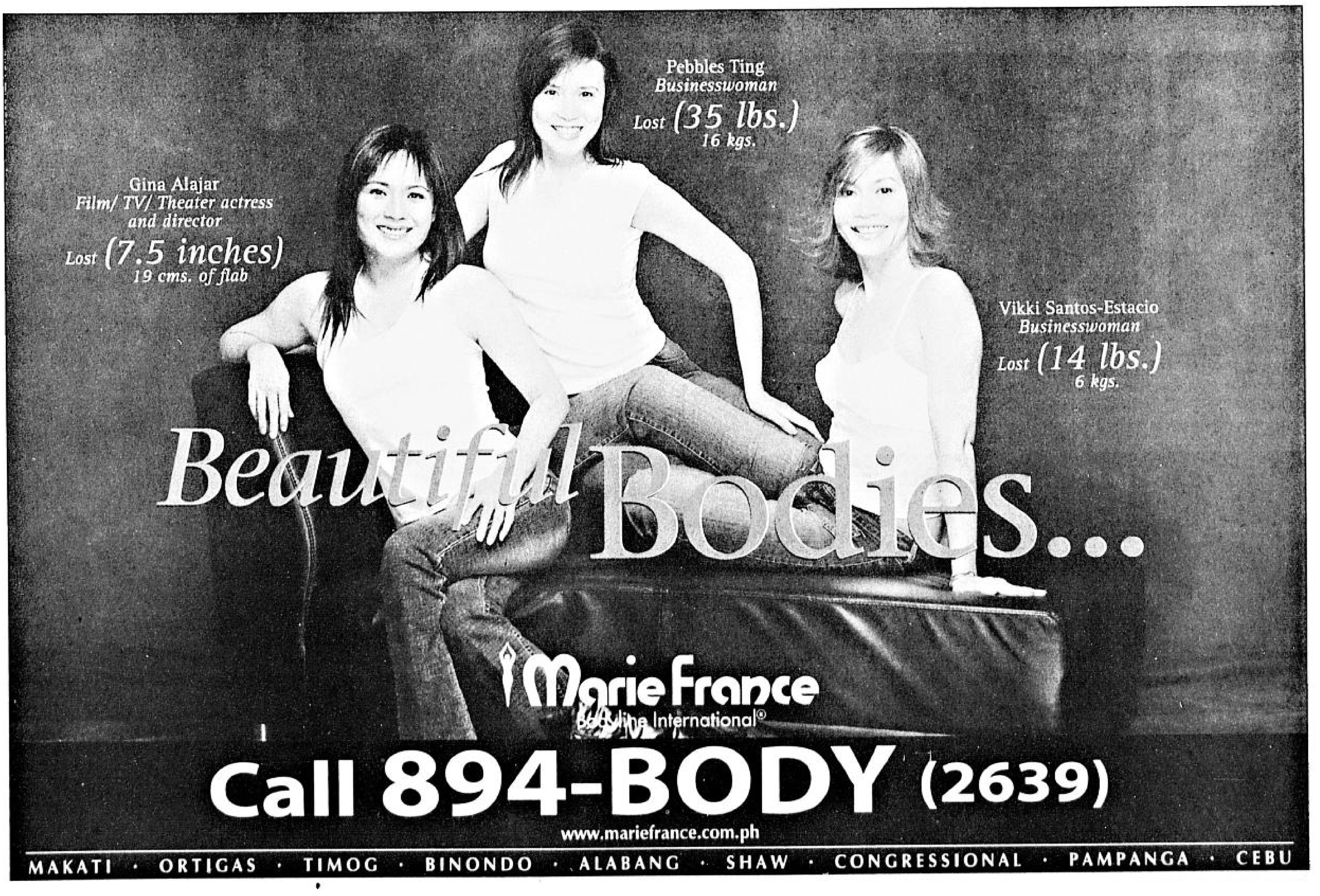
Baking I (Basic): May 4-7 or 25-28 (T-F) 1:30-5 p.m. Basic basics of baking including techniques applied to the preparation of pies, quick breads, cakes and more. P3,000 with free cookbook.

Cooking I: May 18-21 or June 1-4 (T-F) 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Proper Hygiene, sanitation and safety; nutrition and nutritional cooking; stocks, soups and sauces and its 1001 application to poultry, fish, shellfish, fruits and vegetables, common herbs and spices; purchasing; marketing and proper storage; menu planning; simple garnish and plate presentation. Plus actual cooking workshop on the preparation of dishes from appetizer to dessert. P4,000.

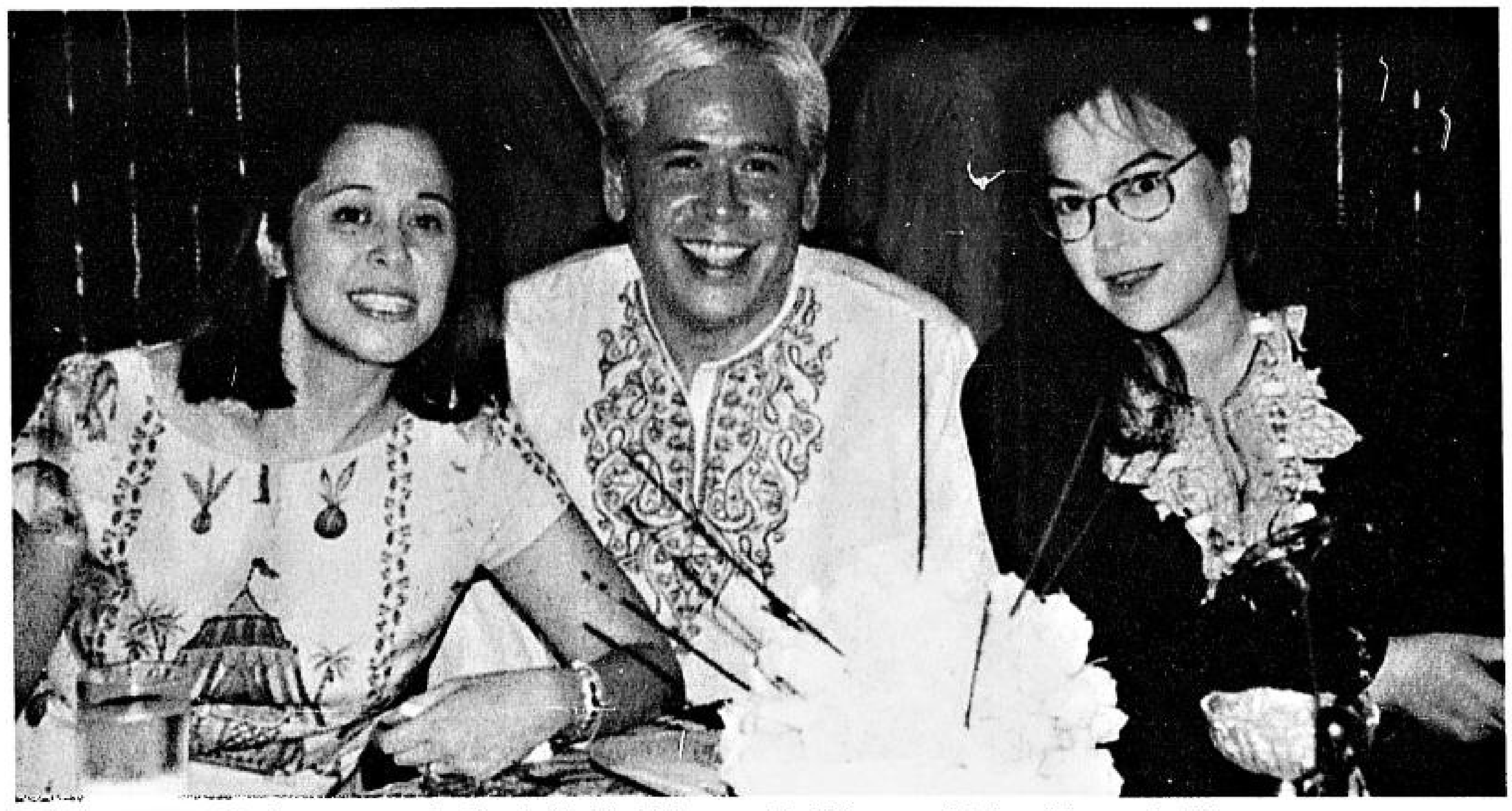
Cake Decorating (Basic): May 22 & 29 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Lecture-workshop on fundamentals of cake decorating; coloring, designing, template, icing (boiled, butter, caramel, chocolate, sugar icing); basic borders, jelly lettering, basic flower making and bunching. P3,000.

Cooking 2: May 25-29 (T-S) 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Review of basic culinary principles; Meal Management; Knowledge of Herbs, Spices and Condiments; Basic Maintenance and Preservation of Food (Proper Receiving, Storage and Preparation); Menu Planning, Kitchen Accounting and Recipe Formulation; Actual Workshop on international cuisine: ethnic cooking, hors d'ouvre, salads, cooked/cured/prepared foods and quick desserts; Market Basket Activity. P5,000.

For inquiries, visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesdays thru Saturdays) at 8th floor, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave. (Pasay Road), Makati City or call tel. 892-1185 or 892-5011 loc. 108, or e-mail us at mayakitchen@pacific.net.ph

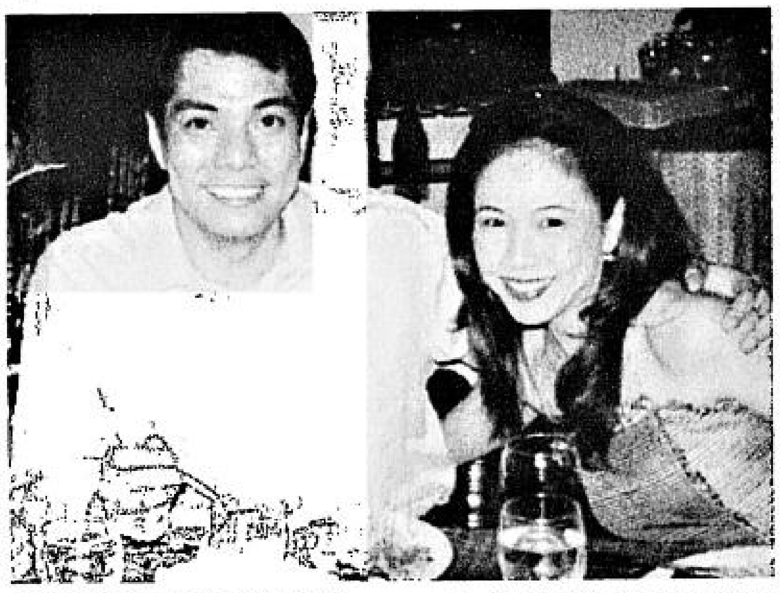


WHITE wine for three. Irene Martel-Francisco, Robbie Francisco and Jacques Dupasquier


GANG OF THREE. The hostesses, cousins Chuchu Madrigal-Eduque and Bela Vasquez, with the celebrator, Raul Manzano

CULTURAL- and charity-oriented gals. Renna Hechanova-Angeles and Bea Zobel Jr.

GOING SOLO. Kashieca boutique's in-demand bachelorette Karen Santos


COOSOME TWOSOME. Businessman Dondi Almario and lovely Otta Uy Montinola

PALS from way back. Bingbing Gonzalez and Charlie Carmona

RENOWNED designer Rhett Eala

BACK in town. Joji Dingcong, the starmaker

POPULAR Marianne Uy with her husband, well-respected Econ Holding Corp. president Noel Onate

An 'Indian' birthday party

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** on **Kodak Max**

YOUNG cousins and members of Cosmo Manille's *alta sociedad*—fashion plate **Chuchu Madrigal-Eduque** and brilliant **Bela Madrigal Vazquez**—gave a fun, intimate birthday dinner for their best pal, banker and entrepreneur **Raul Manzano**, who turned fortysomething, *palanggas*. Raul, who usually jets out of the country on his birthday, was persuaded by Chuchu to say "yes," though with a bit of apprehension.

The dinner was held in Chuchu's ultra modern sprawling home in chi-chi North Forbes. The 26 chosen invitees included some of Manille's beautiful couples like **Sander Tantoco** and his beloved **Mons Romulo**; **Irene Martel** and her husband, cardiologist Dr. **Randy Francisco**; ahh, adorable lovers **Bea Zobel Jr.** and **Joel Uichico**; and **Otta Uy Montinola** with her man, **Dondi Almario.**

Also there were Econ Holding Corp.'s president, business magnate **Noel Onate**; **Bea Vazquez Fox**; gentleman for all seasons **Sel Yulo**; observant **Vanna Virata**; Kashieca boutique's **Karen Santos**; renowned interior designer **Pandot Ocampo**; super fun, vivacious **Bingbing Gonzalez**; **Charlie Carmona**, on a rare night out; **Robbie Francisco** of the popular Arrakis; good-looking gent **Toffer Vidal**; working socialite **Renna Hechanova**; international businessman **Jacques Dupasquier**; eye-catching ultra glam gal **Vicky Zubiri**; and top couturier **Rhett Eala**.

Guests were asked to "come in an Indian outfit," which they did, including the celebrator Raul, natch. Since it was a nice cool evening, cocktails and yummy Indian canapes were served under a tent in the garden, filled with Chuchu's collection of rare Persian carpets, Indian ottomans and other stuff, and incense. Karen Santos helped decorate the place.

At 8:30, we all sat down for the excellent dinner catered by the popular Kashmir resto, darlings, held in the cavernous living room. The three dinner tables were covered with Indian silk and gold pieces. The scent of roses, sampaguita and incense filled the room.

Chitchat in one table got super interesting when the invitees insisted that Dr. Randy Francisco tell the story of how he proposed on his knees to Irene Martel. In another table, everyone listened to Sel Yulo recount his near-death experience when he had a heart attack while in another, politics was the subject of juicy gossip. Asian Spirit's Noel Onate expounded on the intricacies of the changing political landscape, *palanggas*. The guests returned to the tent in the garden after dinner and sipped champagne.

And who was the popular persona they were talking about, who was down in the dumps lately and was trying to drown depression with the lethal combination of vodka and tequila? The real trouble with this persona is those hotshot basketball players the persona can't get enough of! Oops!

With Dom Perignon flowing all night, the fun went on and on and it was no surprise that most everyone's tongue was loosened.

Hot party

After coming from a *tres* chi-chi wedding, we headed to Nuvo where BBC's hot party was in full swing with stylish babe **Celine Lopez**, hip restaurateur DJ **Montano** and ace interior designer **Miguel Rosales** as DJs. A little tipsy from all the wine and champagne at the wedding, *moi* instantly sobered up when I saw my pals sitting at one long table in the patio.

Celine Lopez was within arm's length of ex-steadier-than-steady escort, ADB's **Antonio R. Garcia**, who was within elbow-touching length from New York City gal **Sunshine de Leon**, who he has been seeing quiet steadily, too. To Celine's right was former longtime boyfriend, young architect **Victor Consunji**, who was waiting for a call from his current lady love, vivacious **Chinggay Andrada.**

Eligible bachelor **Chut Cuerva**, who used to be Celine's steady, too, was with his recently found love, exotic beauty, L'Oreal's PR manager, professional products division, **Angelique Villaraza**, who broke off with her fiancé of six years, tall, popular **Joel Ong**, who was in another table on a boys' night out with his pals. Then there was stunningly gorgeous **Charlotte Teodoro** who chatted for a while with **Nino Zulueta**, brother of Charlotte's ex-husband, young contractor **Bacchus Teehankee Zulueta**, who was chatting with top DJ **Manolet Dario**, who has just parted ways with ravishing beauty **Rachel Lobangco**.

Breezing in later was another eligible bachelor, **Manny del Rosario**. We don't know who he really fancies. Is it Celine or Charlotte? And so, *palanggas*, the merry-go-round goes on.

Reconciliation

The town is abuzz over this high-profile, top charity organizer and CEO of several *tres* chi-chi shops who, apparently, has closed the door to her lover of several years. Reason? Her friends could only speculate. The lady who jetted out of town (she is back now) is the only one who knows what really happened to the hot affair that suddenly turned colder than the winds of Siberia, *palanggas*.

Well, guess what? It seems my two pals are back in each other's arms again, looking more in love than ever after they ironed out whatever caused the brief chill.

Aah, *palanggas*, ain't love better the second time around.

New dance partner

And who is the eye-catching hunk, good-looking blond and dead-ringer for actor **Alec Baldwin** doing the party circuit with ballroom dance empress, a slimmer fashion plate **Becky Garcia**? We discovered his name is **Uli Behringer**, chair of the Behringer Group, no less, dahlings. They have been seen together on different occasions, even at a fund-raising party at The Tent, where they danced oblivious of everyone around them. One recent weekend, they were seen driving around in his brand new cool BMW Z4 sportscar, which attracted a lot of attention.

A friend asked Becky what was going on, and she said they were just good friends and she was enjoying his company.

Well, *palanggas*, isn't that what they all say? So what will happen to her recent steadier than steady blond escort Mr. A.T.? Apparently, he is thousands of miles away. Who can blame the gal for wanting to have fun, *n'est ce pas* (as in, *di bala*?). You go, girl.

IS it love all over again for our ballroom dance empress, vivacious Becky Garcia?

Vina's new admirer

Back in town is that starmaker himself, witty Southern boy with an eye for talent **Joji Dingcong**, after a month-and-a-half in the United States, with one of his A clients, gorgeous Southern belle and renowned singer **Vina Morales**, who packed them in like sardines during her concerts.

The buzz is one of the highest-paid players of the popular San Francisco 49ers football team, good-looking 25 years young **Kevin Barlow**, was completely smitten by Vina's Southern charm and beauty. Well, *palanggas*, he'll just have to join the line of admirers of this talented spitfire who is zooming fast to the galaxy of stars.

And have you seen that fabulous TV ad of DHL on BBC? It's fantastic, brilliantly done. Very hip, fast and total fun. All *moi* can say, is try to catch it.

SOUTHERN belle Vina Morales

POWER guards. Business magnate Sel Yulo with charity worker Vicky Zubiri; sisters and mega businesswomen Bela Vazquez and Bea Vazquez-Fox; and cool Toffer Vidal

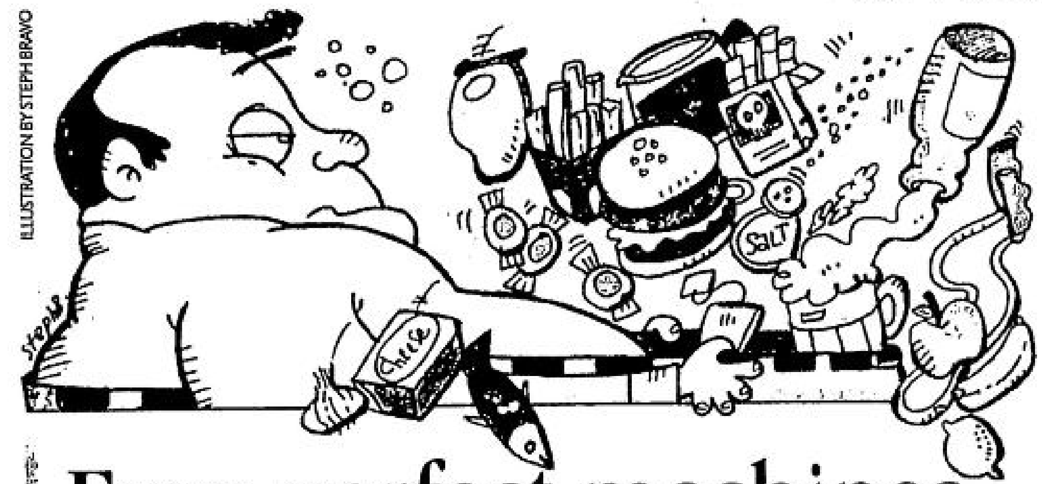
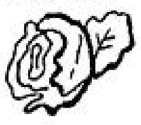


ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

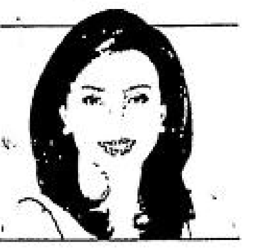
Even perfect machines break down



"He who knows others is wise. He who knows himself is enlightened."—Tao Te Ching

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino



WHY do we do the things we do? For generations, people have pursued success so intensely that they had to resort to what is convenient. Thus, the popularity of fast-food and pre-packed meals as there are careers to be made, reputations to be built.

People "do" lunch, socialize and entertain, consume alcohol (others take recreational drugs), meet deadlines and rush to appointments, constantly in a state of stress as they race against time. Their modern ways keep them from doing things in moderation.

While the human body is likened to a perfect machine (like a Jaguar XJ), all that perfection can be hurt by abuse. If we continue to live unmindful and neglectful of health, "something's got to give," as the saying goes.

Your body will show you the signs of abuse—dull, dry skin; mouth ulcers, constipation, exhaustion, listlessness, weight gain/loss, depression, aches and pains…

You can choose to ignore the signs but remember that early symptoms can lead to serious illness.

What to do:

1. See your physician.
2. Participate in drawing up a health plan of action with her/him.
3. Enroll in a gym.
4. Detoxify your body through a cleansing regimen.
5. Detoxify your mind/heart through meditation and relaxation therapies like yoga/taichi/quigong.

Detox list:

Dried fruit, raw vegetables, potassium-rich foods (like bananas), garlic, sprouts (beans, radish, alfalfa), rice cakes, beet root, humus

Fresh veggies/fruits, fish, herbal teas, water, massage, aromatherapy, exercise, breathing regimens, dry-skin brushing

Restoring balance:

The buildup of stress, pollution, toxins and waste in the body can reach explosive levels. But the good news is, you can achieve balance once again. Start by assessing yourself:

How do you rate your current diet? Score: 3—very healthy; 2—fairly healthy; 1—bad

How are your energy levels? Score: 3—good; 2—okay; 1—low

What best describes your activity level? Score: 3—regular exercise and/or active life/job; 2—some exercise; 1—none at all

How much water do you drink daily? Score: 3—six to 10 glasses; 2—three to five glasses; 1—less than three

How much coffee/tea/sodas/canned drinks a day? Score : 3—a few cups/none; 2—about three; 1—six or more

How much alcohol per week? (note: one unit=one glass) Score : 3— at least four to six units; 2—eight to twelve units; 1—15 units or more

How much fresh fruit/vegetable daily? Score : 3—at least three to four portions; 2—one to two portions; 1—one or none

Add your scores. If you scored above 14, you should be able to begin a detox program. If below 14, make some changes now such as:

Start doing regular mild exercises (walk 20 minutes daily or run up and down the stairs five times before bedtime).

Drink six to eight glasses of water daily, reduce alcohol intake by half, reduce caffeine intake by half, eat three servings of fruit and veggies a day. (note: one portion is one fruit and, for veggies, a large serving spoon).

Detox day:

Drink a hot cup of lemon juice in the morning upon waking up, eight to 10 glasses of clean water during the day, two liver tonics, two kidney tonics, multivitamin supplements, eat three low-fat/sodium/sugar meals, three portions of raw veggies, three portions of raw/dried fruit, one portion of nonfat milk/cheese, two portions of nuts, beans, herbs, olive oil or fish.

Liver tonic:

A bunch of black grapes, fresh garlic clove or garlic tablet with meals; a glass of pure carrot and beet root juice; two cups of fennel/dandelion tea.

Kidney tonics:

Sip a teaspoon of fresh honey dissolved in a cup of hot water, glass of cranberry juice, medium melon (but don't eat any fruit or food half an hour before and after because it can cause indigestion).

(As we repeatedly say, consult your physician before trying any of these things, particularly if you have an existing medical condition.)

A promise—Instant energy to those who are brave enough to take on this lifestyle change.

Love and light!

Reference: Some portions taken from "Detox Yourself" by Jane Scrivner

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Words will protect you

(Part 4)

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

UTOL Jess Verallo is quite emphatic when explaining to us that their group is not engaged in *anting anting*. He said people who were wearing or showing something were probably beginners or new members who brought their *anting anting* from a previous group they joined.

"But here, we do not use *anting anting* or medallions or amulets. The only thing we use are the sacred words coming from God," *Utol* Jess said.

"Then what do you call the red, sleeveless T-shirts worn by your members with strange symbols or writing on them?" I asked *Utol* Jess. "Are these not *anting anting*?"

God's protection

"No, they are secret words of protection given by God himself," he explained.

"Where did you learn those secret words?" I asked.

"Some of these were given to us by the founder of *Haring Bakal* himself, Dodong Lagari, who has died. Others were taken from the Bible and still others, strange as it may sound, were given to me in my dreams. We believe that nothing can be more powerful than the words of God."

Haring Bakal officers explained that there were many superstitions surrounding the practice of *anting anting*. "For example, one cannot bring an amulet inside the cemetery, in the toilet or in a hospital, otherwise it will lose its power.

"Neither can it be touched by a woman, especially when she is menstruating. Our members go to cemeteries, visit hospitals or go inside toilets without having to remove anything because the power is within them and not in the *anting anting*."

Utol Jess explained that the red T-shirt was worn only when going to dangerous places, when one believed his life might be in danger so that, in case of emergency, he was fully protected even if he did not utter any power word or *oracion*. A member could go about his business with full confidence and without fear.

Initiates are given a prayer that they are supposed to say at sunrise (6 a.m.) and at sunset (6 p.m.) so that they are protected the whole day and throughout the evening. They say the power given to an initiate is like a plant that must be watered daily to live and grow strong. Without prayer, the power soon weakens and dies.

A newly initiated woman companion of ours, who said the prayer for the first time, told me she felt like she was levitating. Another felt strong energy enter his body.

Strange photos of the bolo

Two strange things happened during the blessing in Lipa, for which I could find no rational explanation. First, none of the photos taken when I was being blessed, came out. The shots were not even in the negatives.

But when I asked Ruben, he said, "I took shots of you thrice. First, when you were being hacked on the thigh. Second, on the stomach; and third when *Utol* Jess Verallo was shaking your hand after the blessing."

He said what happened was very strange because he was sure he clicked the shutter and the flash was seen by others. Ruben said he was familiar with most cameras and knew how to work them. However, all the pictures I took of the others being blessed came out very well.

Second strange incident: When the pictures I took of the blessing were developed, I noticed that the steel bolo held by Sonny Maranan (the group's president and Jess Verallo's assistant), while JR Villanueva and Obet del Rosario were being blessed, seemed translucent. It was as if the solid steel had become a shaft of etheric energy.

When I showed it to several sensitive individuals, they at once noticed the remarkable transformation of the bolo. This could explain why the sharp blade of the bolo did not cut our skin. It was not a physical object that hit us but a force of energy. This is consistent with Einstein's theory that matter can be converted into energy which he proved with his famous formula: $E=mc^2$.

In one photo I took on Good Friday, even the hand of Jess Verallo became transparent as he was about to strike an initiate. In another remarkable photo taken a week later, the bolo that Sonny Maranan was holding completely disappeared. The photo shows him in the act of striking an initiate but no bolo could be seen.

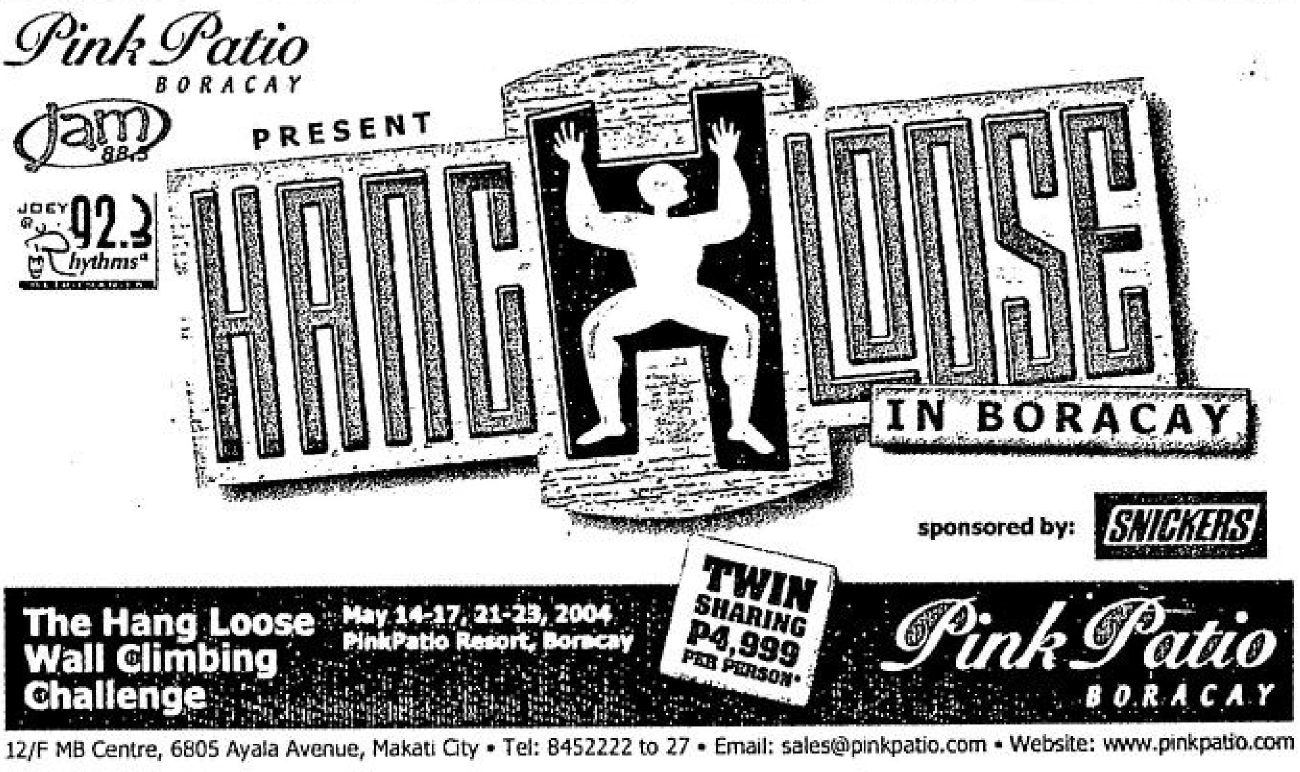
I was present during the incident and I saw that bolo hit the person being blessed. Why did it disappear in the photo?

One more thing I observed in the pictures was this: Everybody appeared to be in a state of trance or in an altered state of consciousness. In that state, one's perception of reality as well as of time is distorted. It was as if time stood still while the initiate was undergoing the blessing.

What happened seemed to be dreamlike and surreal. It was as if one entered the world of a different matrix and configuration just like Keanu Reeves did in "The Matrix."

Next week: Strange marks appear on the body.

Listen to to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 7-8:30 p.m.



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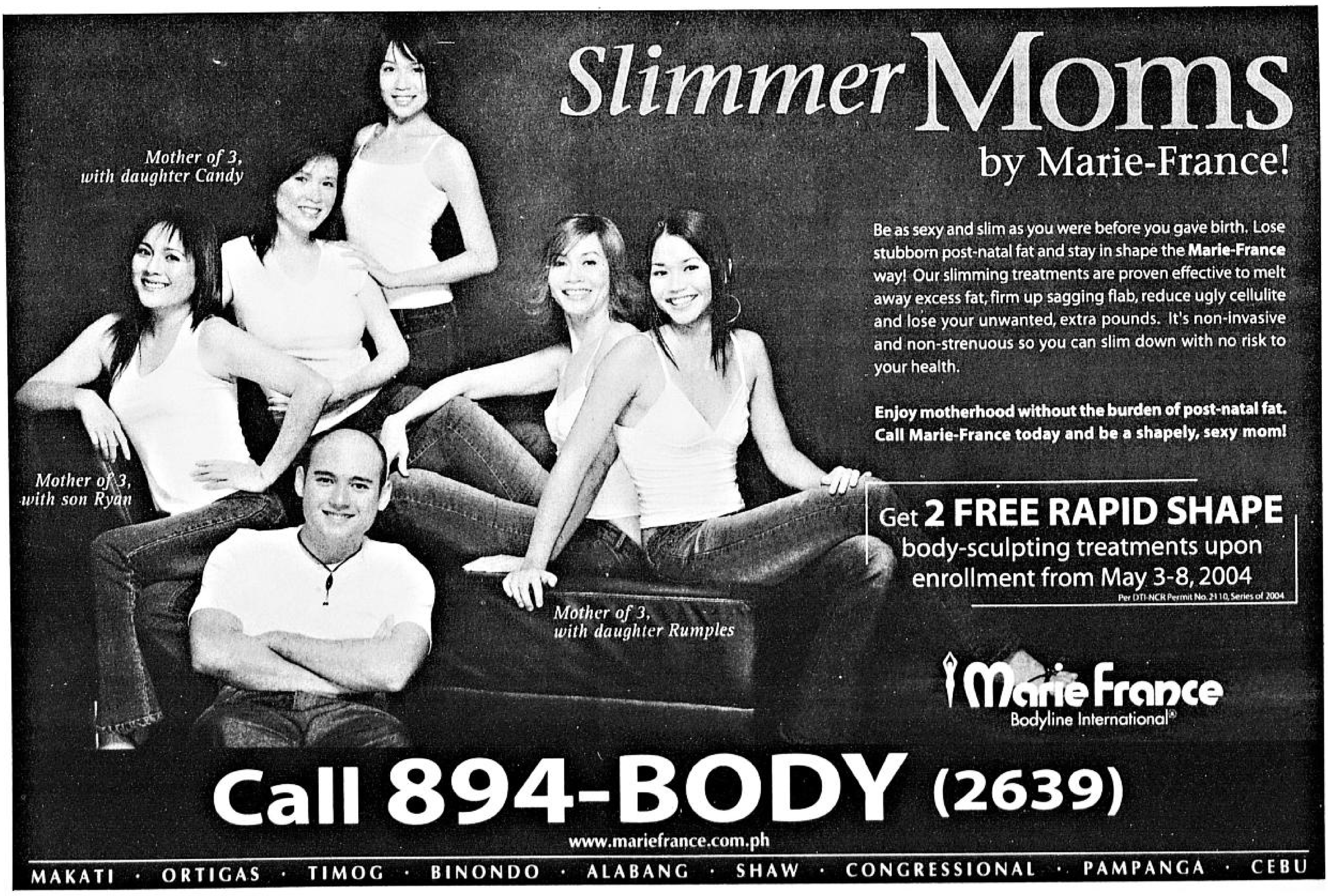

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Fitness gives good return on investment

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

I WILL leave the discussion of ways to increase your physical energy at work for next week. Instead I will show how physical fitness improves your performance at work and also helps improve a company's fiscal fitness.

On the surface, it doesn't seem to make sense why a person who sits at a desk working on a computer or on office papers need to be as fit as someone with a more physically demanding job like a farmer.

Performance psychologist Jim Loehr explains why in his book, "The Power of Full Engagement":

"Because the rest of us are evaluated more by what we do with our minds than with our bodies, we tend to discount the role that physical energy plays in performance.

"In reality, physical energy is the most fundamental source of fuel, even if our work is almost completely sedentary. It not only lies at the heart of alertness and vitality but also affects our ability to manage our emotions, sustain concentration, think creatively, and even maintain our commitment to whatever mission we are on. Leaders and managers make a fundamental mistake when they assume that they can overlook the physical dimension of energy and still expect those who work for them to perform at their best."

Fitness and performance

A Purdue University study of 80 executives found that those who exercised improved their ability to make complex decisions by 70 percent compared with non-exercisers.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration found that participants in their corporate exercise program experienced improved stamina, work performance, enhanced concentration and decision-making powers. Some 40 percent reported sleeping more soundly, 60 percent succeeded in losing weight, 50 percent paid more attention to their diets. Many quit or cut down on smoking.

The Canada Life Assurance Company reported that 47 percent of participants in their fitness program were more alert, had better rapport with coworkers and supervisors, and enjoyed work more than those who did not participate. About 63 percent said they were more relaxed, more patient and less tired at work.

Union Pacific Railroad found 80 percent of workers believed its exercise program helped increase productivity, and 75 percent said regular exercise improved their concentration at work.

A study by Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising found that 63 percent of employees in the fitness program believed it improved their productivity; 75 percent said it boosted their morale.

Economic benefits

Nasa found that while the average office worker's efficiency decreased 50 percent during the final two hours of a working day, exercise participants worked at full efficiency all day. This meant a 12.5 percent increase in productivity.

DuPont experienced a 14 percent decline in disability days in 24 months. Savings from this offset the program's costs in the first year, and gave a return of $2.05 for every dollar invested. Absenteeism by corporate fitness participants fell by 47.5 percent over six years.

The Coors Brewing Corp. got as much as a $6.15 return for every $1 invested in a corporate fitness program. Companies including Equitable Life Assurance, PepsiCo and Motorola reported a $3 return at least for every dollar invested.

General Mills found that absenteeism among participants in the fitness program fell by 19 percent but rose by 69 percent among non-participants.

At Kimberly-Clark, a 12-month survey of employees in the program showed a 43 percent drop in absenteeism.

Johnson and Johnson's absenteeism rate fell by 15 percent within two years of introducing a corporate fitness program. Participants had a 13 percent reduction in sick days while non-participants had a 9 percent increase. After three years, the firm's hospital costs fell by 34 percent.

General Electric reduced health care costs for fitness program participants by 38 percent in 18 months, while those for non-members rose 21 percent.

At Canada Life, the average turnover rate of 15 percent dropped to 1.5 percent for those in the fitness program.

General Motors found that employees in a physical fitness program had 50 percent less job grievances and on-the-job accidents, and 40 percent less lost time.

Good for business

Dr. Dee Edington of the University of Michigan says, "Wellness programs in general, and fitness programs in particular may be the only employee benefits which pay money back. When more people come to work, you don't need to pay overtime or temporary help; when people stay at the job longer, training costs go down; lower health care claims cost you less if you're self-insured—and health care insurers as well as some companies are already beginning to create premiums based on fitness levels."

Ultimately, however, you are responsible for your health and fitness. Take the case of a small company that enrolled its employees in our gym many years ago. The owner believed it would cost him much more to replace executives if they suddenly died because they were fat and unfit (Xerox calculated that it cost them US$1.5 million dollars to replace a top executive who died unexpectedly at a young age).

But many employees came only occasionally. Some even tried to bribe our instructors to mark them as present while they played hooky. You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink.

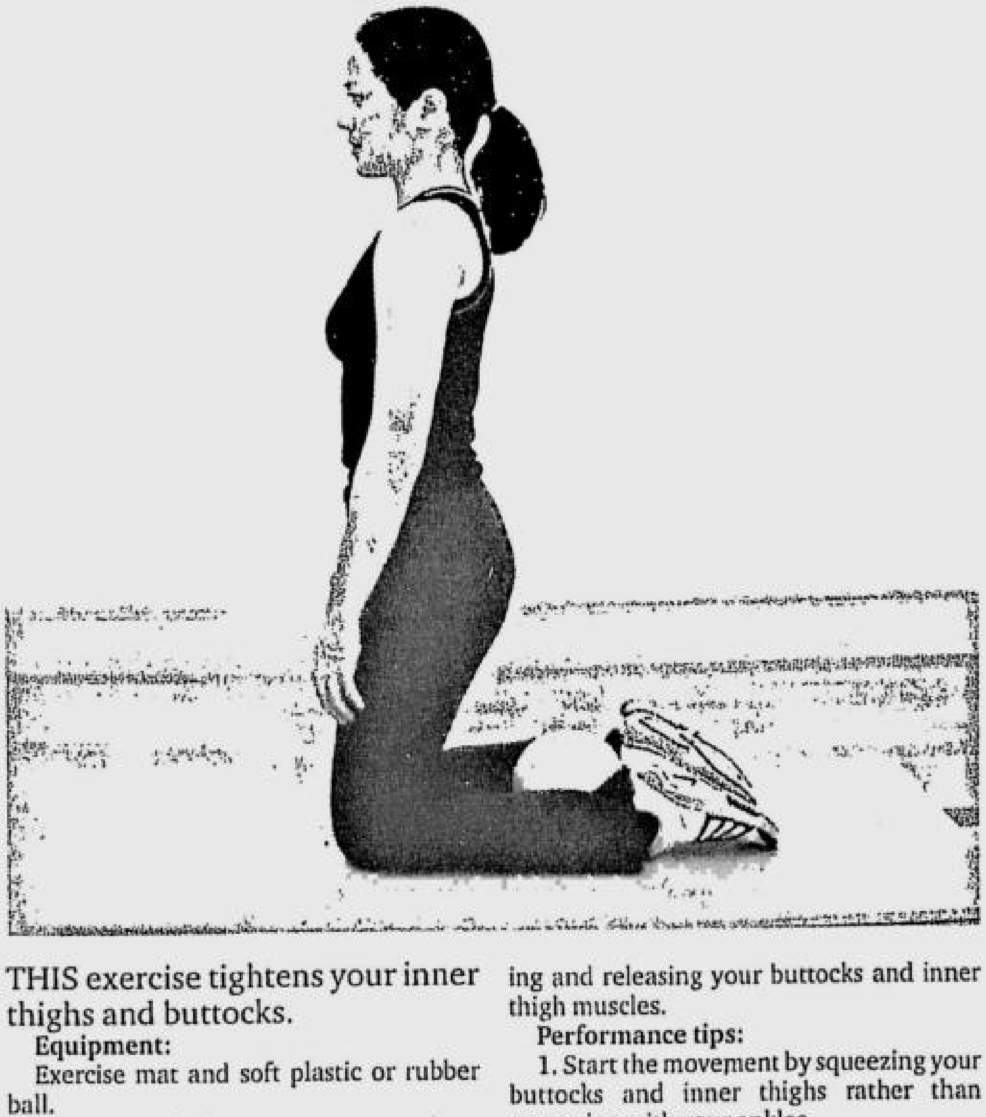
Why did some companies succeed in making employees fit and healthy? The answers in a future column. Next week, simple tips to become more energetic at work.

Statistics were gathered from reports of the International Health, Racquet, and Sports Association and the Canadian government's "Business Case for Active Living at Work."

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Kneeling mini-ball squeezes



THIS exercise tightens your inner thighs and buttocks.

Equipment:

Exercise mat and soft plastic or rubber ball.

Exercise technique:

1. Kneel down with your thighs hip-width apart.

2. Place the ball between your ankles.

3. Keep your torso erect as you press the ball firmly between your ankles by squeezing and releasing your buttocks and inner thigh muscles.

Performance tips:

1. Start the movement by squeezing your buttocks and inner thighs rather than squeezing with your ankles.

2. Avoid slouching.

3. A firm exercise mat is a must to avoid pain in the kneecaps.

Repetitions:

Do 20 repetitions.

Mothers suffer in silence . . .

. . . by Mother's Day she will be smiling!

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MEDICard

Take Charge Doc!

Dr. Nicky S. Montoya

Take Charge Doc! kicks off its 4th year with a totally different concept. From the previous format of being a question and answer guide for members about MEDICard and its services, to an almanac of knowledge in healthcare.

The New Take Charge Doc! now features questions and answers about general health issues and illnesses answered through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. And in a common thrust with the campaigns of the government, your weekly healthcare guide parallels its features on the Calendar of Health Events of the Department of Health, featuring for this month of May an awareness campaign on Cervical Cancer.

What causes Cervical Cancer? Can it be inherited?

The exact cause of Cervical Cancer is still unknown. It is most likely that there is no single cause. Some factors seem to put some women at a slightly higher risk, but is not hereditary.

The following are the risk factors for Cervical Cancer:

1. **The Warts Virus** (also known as the Human Papilloma Virus). The Warts Virus is a common infection which most of us are unaware of until it shows up on a Pap Test. In some women, the virus causes small invisible warts. Many people however, carry the Warts Virus without showing signs of abnormal or precancerous changes. The virus is linked with about 95% of Cervical Cancers and is one of the most common causes of sexually transmitted diseases, worldwide.
2. **Early age of first sexual intercourse.**
3. **Multiple sexual partners** or a partner with multiple sexual partners.
4. **Smoking.** Harmful chemicals present in cigarette smoke have been found in the mucus of the cervix.

MEDICard accredited specialist **Dr. Eunice Theres Adanza-Cutillar** answers this week's feature-question on Cervical Cancer. Dr. Cutillar, a graduate of Medicine from De La Salle University, specializes in Internal Medicine. She also subspecializes in Medical Oncology which she finished at UP-PGH in 1998. Doc Eunice, a Diplomate and Fellow of the Philippine College of Physicians, is also a Professor at the College of Medicine of the University of Perpetual Help in Las Piñas City and at the De La Salle University in Dasmariñas, Cavite. For consultations, members may visit her at Alabang Medical Clinic (Main) located at Montillano St. in Muntinlupa City, every Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 AM to 12 noon. Members may also seek consultation services at the OPD clinic of Perpetual Help Medical Center, every Mondays from 3 to 5 PM and on Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 AM to 12 noon.

BE HEARD AND BE READ. Write to DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA (c/o TAKE CHARGE DOC!) or e-mail him at inquiry @medicardphils.com for inquiries on health matters.

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